United Nations S/PV.8187

# Security Council

Seventy-third year

*Provisional*

**8187**th meeting

Thursday, 22 February 2018, 4 p.m.

New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Alotaibi | (Kuwait) |
| *Members*: | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mr. Inchauste Jordán |
| | China | Mr. Zhang Dianbin |
| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue |
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| | Russian Federation | Mr. Polyanskiy |
| | Sweden | Mr. Skoog |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Clay |
| | United States of America | Ms. Tachco |

## Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/125)

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18-04835 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Central African Republic**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2018/125)**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic; Mr. Esa Pulkkinen, Commander of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic; and His Excellency Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco, in his capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Nébié and Mr. Pulkkinen are joining us via video-teleconference from Bouar, Central African Republic, and Brussels, respectively.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/125, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, Mr. Nébié, Mr. Pulkkinen, Ambassador Hilale and Ambassador Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoue, Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic.

Before giving the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga, I call on all briefers to limit their statements to five minutes in accordance with paragraphs 22 and 41 of the memo circulated by the President.

I now give the floor to Mr. Onanga-Anyanga.

**Mr. Onanga-Anyanga** (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a welcome duty to speak before the Security Council today. I look forward to taking part with the other important Central African Republic partners here at this meeting, in particular my colleague and brother Ambassador Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic, who, as you mentioned, Mr. President, will be speaking later via video-teleconference from Bouar, where, together with other members of the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, he is pursuing his noble mission in the search for lasting peace in that country.

The report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2018/125) has already been submitted to the Security Council. I shall simply make a few additional remarks.

I am here today to address the issue of the violence and atrocities that continue to affect a large swath of the Central African civilian population. The unacceptable violence and human rights violations are the work of armed groups that have not yet renounced armed violence and are slow to engage in dialogue with the Government. The result of that obstinacy reminds us that in spite of our efforts, the path to peace, stability and reconciliation in Central Africa remains long and arduous. Returning refugees and the internally displaced to their homes remains a challenge. This veritable human tragedy is exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation, in which life for nearly half of the Central African population is unimaginable, given the lack of emergency humanitarian assistance.

I should like to pay tribute once again to humanitarian workers in the Central African Republic, in particular those who have lost their lives in an attempt to save millions of others. It is because of such acts of heroism, and in particular the daily sacrifices and tireless efforts of the staff of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), who often risk their lives, that we have been able to mitigate the impact of armed conflicts and prevent so many others.

Nonetheless, their sacrifice is not in vain. Despite great adversity, peace lies ahead in the Central African

Republic. Every day we regain some of the legitimacy once lost. The Government is working assiduously to restore the authority of the State and to strengthen newly established democratic institutions. The inclusive political process initiated by President Touadéra is gradually gaining ground and now has the full support of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, backed by the United Nations and all of Central Africa's other strategic partners.

The ongoing dialogue and political process involving the main actors and partners now underpin multidimensional efforts under way to emerge from the crisis, such as the Government's attempts to better represent contemporary society and the tangible progress made in enhancing the authority of the State by appointing prefects in the 16 prefectures and in the majority of sub-prefectures. The new prefect of Ndélé, in the north-east, has just assumed office. It is hoped that the success of the pilot disarmament, demobilization and reintegration project will enable it to be launched on a wider scale, thanks financial and technical support provided by the World Bank.

All elements of MINUSCA are involved in the process, as it is vital to stability in Central Africa. That shift in the right direction is also demonstrated in the strengthening of national judicial institutions. In addition, preparations for the start of the work of the Special Criminal Court are well under way. Two days ago, the Government issued a decree confirming the appointment of judicial police officers, which would allow the Court to start its investigations. The message is clear: the fight against persistent impunity, which has been the source of recurring conflict in Central Africa, has begun. This formal judicial institution will very soon be complemented by new transitional justice mechanisms, which will lead to an improved balance between justice and national reconciliation and guarantee lasting peace.

Thanks to the multifaceted efforts under way, security and defence structures are now undergoing far-reaching reforms. The central role played by the European Union Training Mission to reform the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA), is commendable. For its part, MINUSCA is strengthening its support of Central African security forces by recruiting gendarmerie and police officers at the technical level and by supporting the implementation of various strategic frameworks. Every effort must now be made to sustain the gains made and to marshal considerable resources for the next five years. The support of key partners, such as France, the United States of America, China and the Russian Federation, should be underscored. Not long ago, the mere idea of a joint MINUSCA-FACA endeavour was unimaginable. We are now partners in field operations, such as in Paoua and Obo, in the south-east. At the request of the Security Council, the Central African authorities and MINUSCA have agreed on a plan for the use and deployment of the Central African defence and security forces. In May, the Secretary-General will submit to the Council a detailed plan to ensure more effective collaboration and support.

(*spoke in English*)

As we contemplate ways and means to strengthen the support that we provide to the national defence and security forces, we remain dedicated to optimizing our own performance. Moreover, our commitment to performance is as strong as our resolve to abide by the highest standards of conduct and discipline. Let it be clear that sexual exploitation and abuse have no place in peacekeeping. The Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy will remain an integral part of our duty to protect.

Efforts are under way to more effectively protect civilian populations, while ensuring the safety and security of our own peacekeepers. Because of the nature of the threats we face in the Central African Republic, unless MINUSCA has the capacity to apply meaningful military pressure on armed groups that remain reluctant to embrace peace, no peace process will have the chance to succeed. That is why I am highly appreciative of the ongoing outreach by the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Lacroix to secure the 900 additional troops that the Security Council authorized in the renewed mandate. I would like to thank the troop-contributing countries for their dedication and their sacrifice for the cause of peace in the Central African Republic.

But the work is not over yet. More will be required from us all. The fate of millions of civilians hinges on the commitment of well-equipped, well-trained and determined troops who use all the power bestowed upon them by the Council to protect populations from harm. I am grateful to our military and police forces for their hard work and robust posture, which we observed in Bambari early last year, and in Bocaranga and Bang in late 2017. That is the current situation in Paoua, where the MINUSCA force is engaged in a military operation

to create a safe and secure area for the people of Paoua and the entire prefecture of Ouham-Pendé, and we are determined to do even more.

Together with the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, the Mission continues to work towards the sustainable reduction of the presence of and the threat posed by armed groups through a comprehensive and proactive approach. The additional 900 troops will boost those efforts by enhancing our flexibility and our capacity to react. As highlighted in the new mandate, MINUSCA is supporting Government-led processes to reduce conflict at the local level to complement and support the African initiative.

I must emphasize that the success of our collective effort will require the delivery of tangible peace dividends for the people of the Central African Republic. Urgent efforts are needed to translate the country's recovery and peacebuilding plan into an effective programme for change that can be used in both governance and people's livelihoods. As just briefly outlined, and as challenging as things are, the picture in the Central African Republic is not as hopeless as the raw numbers and media reports make it appear. With the continuous support of the Council and everyone's sacrifice and dedication — first and foremost, those of the Central Africans themselves — there are reasons to remain hopeful and to believe that an era of peace, stability and prosperity will soon be within reach.

(*spoke in French*)

In my remarks today, I have endeavoured to give a brief overview of the challenges in the Central African Republic, but I have also tried to highlight the many windows of opportunity to a more stable future. The region and the international community have a vital role to play in helping the Government of the Central African Republic build on its accomplishments. It is essential that the country remain a priority for the Security Council and continue to receive international support commensurate with its strategic priorities. In so doing, we will help create the conditions for inclusive socioeconomic recovery and long-term peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Onanga-Anyanga for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Nébié.

**Mr. Nébié** (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I thank the Security Council for the opportunity to brief it on the current situation in the Central African Republic.

It is thanks to the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) that I am speaking to the Council from the city of Bouar, about 450 kilometres north-west of Bangui in the prefecture of Nana-Mambéré. My briefing will focus on the following points: the status of implementation of the road map of African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in Central Africa, the agenda of the Initiative and the impact it has had on the ground.

With regard to the status of implementation, the panel of facilitators undertook a first field visit in November and December 2017 to meet with the senior military and political leadership of 14 armed groups recognized by the Government. The main objectives of the field mission were to establish initial contact between the armed groups and the panel of facilitators with a view to creating an atmosphere of trust, deliver a message from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to the armed groups, invite them to join the Initiative's road map, and hear the armed groups' demands. At the end of the first field visit, the main concerns voiced were political, socioeconomic, security-related, administrative and judicial. In addition to meeting with armed groups, the panel also met with local players in civil and political life to hear their concerns. In the interests of transparency and openness, the results of these conversations were shared with the Head of State, the President and other the senior-ranking members of the National Assembly, the political parties, the diplomatic corps, civil-society organizations and the general public through a press conference.

Secondly, with regard to the agenda of the Initiative, from 19 February to 17 March the panel will have been in the field for its second visit, during which it will meet the same players as in the first field visit. The main objectives of this round are to extract written demands and proposed solutions from the parties, build on the trust established between the panel and the armed groups in the first round, prepare the armed groups for dialogue with the Government, obtain a firmer commitment to non-violence, and create conditions that ensure the safety of all populations and respect for State authority and humanitarian actors. At the end of this second round, the groups' demands will be submitted

to the Government for study. A seminar on capacity-building for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and crises will be organized for the armed groups and local players in civil and political life. After that, the dialogue with the Government will be organized.

Thirdly, with regard to the Initiative's impact, signs of hope for a peace agreement were already perceptible at the end of the first field visit. All the armed groups with which we met welcomed the message of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who called on them to join the peace and reconciliation process and to end all forms of violence. They have read the content of the Initiative road map and are committed to reporting back to their respective bases. They shared their concerns with the panel of facilitators and showed their willingness to discuss issues of concern with the Government.

During the first round, it was also agreed to establish a permanent contact group between the panel and the armed groups. Through this mechanism, the panel questioned armed groups that had engaged in confrontations or shown a desire to undermine peace. This effort has contributed to lowering tensions in certain regions, causing some leaders of the politico-military movements to change their positions and accept diplomats and prefects in their areas, as Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga mentioned earlier, and to persuading others to agree to renounce confrontation and enter into the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration programme. These results are also the combined outcome of the efforts of the Central African authorities and the integrated action of all partners in the international community, who have been resolutely committed to finding peace in the Central African Republic. In this respect, I welcome the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2387 (2017).

In conclusion, and to make a recommendation on security, a small amount of progress has clearly been made, but it is progress all the same, particularly when we keep in mind the depth and duration of the crisis in the Central African Republic. It is true that what follows is likely to be difficult, but all those living in the Central African Republic have witnessed the progress made thus far and expressed optimism and hope for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the country.

I therefore renew my plea for the continued support and solidarity of the Security Council and the international community as a whole for the Central African Republic, specifically by encouraging President Faustin Archange Touadéra and his Government to selflessly pursue their many efforts that are beginning to yield good results, by making a forceful appeal to the armed groups to fully participate in the dialogue process that is currently being prepared, and by assisting the panel so that it may continue to develop its programme.

I also take this opportunity to reiterate my thanks to Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of MINUSCA, and his entire team for their full support and assistance in the ongoing political process. My thanks also go to the European Union and other development partners.

The five minutes allocated to me could not be enough to outline in full detail what is happening in the Central African Republic. But we who are on the ground are committed and determined, and we believe that the Central African people deserve our assistance through to the end of this effort and that we shall achieve peace in the Central African Republic in 2018.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Nébié for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Pulkkinen.

**Mr. Pulkkinen**: I am Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen, and I am grateful to have the opportunity to address the Security Council on the topic of the Central African Republic and the biannual report (S/2018/125) of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

The European Union (EU) greatly welcomes the recent extension of the mandate of MINUSCA, which was adopted in November 2017 (resolution 2387 (2017)). As the Operational Commander, I particularly note that MINUSCA has been given the task of providing support to the progressive and coordinated redeployment of the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) units trained by the European Union Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM-RCA) as an element of the strategy to extend State authority. In addition to the extremely valuable joint deployments already under way, this effort is crucial to restoring State authority. Moreover, it is central to the United Nations and EU achieving their wider strategic objectives in the Central African Republic.

To put my role and that of my organization in context, I am the Director of the EU's Military Planning and Conduct Capability. This is a Brussels-based organization that carries out the roles and responsibilities of an operational headquarters. Currently under my command are three EU training missions in Africa, one of them being the training mission in the Central African Republic.

I should underline that the EUTM-RCA is an unarmed training mission. It contributes to defence sector reform within the Central African effort to that end being coordinated by MINUSCA. It assists in the progressive development of a democratically controlled, professional, credible, accountable and ethnically and regionally balanced FACA. Its mandate includes close coordination with MINUSCA. The joint MINUSCA-EU delegation and EUTM-RCA support plan on security sector reform and the rule of law in the Central African Republic, signed in July last year, aims to define the basis of our coordination and complementarity in all our activities.

Despite some progress, we remain seriously concerned by the worsening security and humanitarian situation. The crisis in the Central African Republic will not be resolved by force, but rather through dialogue, justice and reconciliation. In that context, the EU fully supports President Touadéra and his Government in their efforts to build peace in the Central African Republic.

The Council is aware that the Central African armed forces, trained by EUTM, have already started to deploy to operations, with the support of MINUSCA — albeit in small numbers and despite considerable logistical constraints. Reports on their performance in those joint deployments have been favourable, both from the operational point of view and with regard to non-governmental organizations and public opinion. Although they are a step in the right direction, these small-scale operations, originating in Bangui, are not enough to reoperationalize the FACA.

All political actors and international partners agree on the need to restore State authority throughout the country as a key factor in resolving the crisis. Therefore, the redeployment of the armed forces and the internal security forces is recognized as critical to enabling the return of public institutions and services to the entire territory, as well as to deterring armed groups.

In order to restore authority to the regions, a 9,800-strong army is planned by 2021, with around 4,500 of those troops redeployed outside Bangui. That implies a huge effort: infrastructure development, sustainment capability and effective logistical support will be crucial.

In the context of a Government that has been in power for almost two years and whose army is largely confined to Bangui, MINUSCA is the key enabler that will allow us to capitalize on what has been achieved to date. The troops that EUTM has trained are now being equipped, and we cannot lose momentum in their deployment and operationalization.

MINUSCA remains a critical factor for operationalizing the FACA and for ensuring basic logistical support. Continued support to the FACA in joint deployments on limited military operations is important. But MINUSCA's support, in its next mandate, for the progressive and coordinated deployment in garrisons or decentralized hubs of FACA troops trained by the EUTM is absolutely critical to the extension of the State authority. That, in turn, supports the Central African Republic Government's national defence plan and allows it to demonstrate its willingness to address security and stabilization issues across the whole country. A decentralized army that is able to deploy outside of Bangui is fundamental. With United Nations support, a progressive redeployment of those forces could serve as a concrete example of State authority returning to the provinces, and allow MINUSCA an opportunity to redeploy to areas where it is needed most — helping everyone reach their goals.

If MINUSCA's support for the FACA is withdrawn, that progress would almost certainly stall and, with it, MINUSCA's own mission. On its own, FACA does not have the capacity to deploy or sustain itself, and the critical extension of State authority will cease. The most likely outcome would be FACA's return to Bangui, and the opportunity to restore State control will be lost.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Commander Pulkinnen for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Hilale.

**Mr. Hilale**: In response to your request, Mr. President, I will summarize my briefing.

At the outset, I am grateful for the kind invitation to brief the Security Council on opportunities and challenges to build and sustain peace in the

Central African Republic, in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The fragility of the situation in the Central African Republic remains a concern, with renewed fighting and the emergence of new humanitarian hotspots. At the same time, the combined commitment from the Government, the United Nations system and all other stakeholders to long-term solutions is starting to pay off. Despite delays, the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan and the restoration of State authority are progressing. Efforts are under way to coordinate the deployment of internal security forces, justice actors and providers of basic social services to reinforce the social contract between the population and the State. As we move forward, it will be important to ensure the sequencing and complementarity among reconciliation efforts, the restoration of State authority and delivering peace dividends to the population.

The Central African Republic configuration works to bring a long-term focus to stabilization, reconciliation and development efforts in the country, guided by national priorities. To that end, we provide political accompaniment to the country, promote an integrated and coherent approach to international and regional peacebuilding efforts and draw attention to glaring resource and capacity gaps in the Central African Republic.

In 2017, the configuration focused on the Brussels commitments to implement the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan, primarily Pillar 1, which encompasses security sector reform; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; the rule of law and reconciliation. In line with our commitment to assess the Plan's implementation with multiple stakeholders, I met with World Bank officials last week in Washington, D.C. During our discussions, we addressed resource and capacity gaps that are hampering the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Planand focused on the World Bank's role in its implementation.

I would like to present to the Council some key observations.

First, Central African Republic is at a critical juncture. The Government needs to be supported to drive the reforms necessary for the implementation of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. In Bangui, New York and Washington, D.C., and together with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, I have continued to urge the Government and donors that a robust commitment from both sides is critical for the Plan to succeed. Although $2.23 billion was pledged at the Brussels conference, the delivery rate of ongoing projects for which financing has already been secured was only 16 per cent in 2017. From my contacts with the United Nations, the World Bank and other stakeholders, I understand that the absorption capacity of the Central African Republic Government, the lack of coordination across the line ministries and the absence of the Government and the presence of armed groups across the territory are also perceived to hamper the effective and speedy use of resources.

Secondly, we need to encourage the positive developments regarding the restoration of State authority. There has been progress in the deployment of prefects and sub-prefects in the provinces, and coordination among national institutions has improved at the national and provincial levels. The Government is also engaged in redeploying the national army — the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA) — as well as the national police and gendarmerie, within the broader context of the security sector reform and the extension of State authority. We encourage the Government to both deploy civil servants and to try to provide basic services. That is the only path to lasting stability.

Thirdly, long-term security depends on the prioritization of justice and the fight against impunity. In that regard, we welcome the extradition today from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Bangui of the individual known as "Romaric". He is suspected to be responsible for the massacre of Moroccan and Cambodian Blue Helmets in Bangassou last May. The national Special Criminal Court is an innovative structure that will allow impunity to be addressed. However, the Special Criminal Court faces multiple challenges, including resource deficits for the next five years.

While a strategy on witness and victim protection both for the Special Criminal Court and the national system more broadly has been developed, serious gaps remain on witness and victim protection. The draft rules of procedure and evidence, which will provide guidance for witness protection mechanisms, should be adopted soon. At the same time, we must balance the focus on the Special Criminal Court by supporting the Central African Republic's national justice system. Despite the recent progress of the ordinary courts in Bangui and Bouar, the resumption of justice activities

outside Bangui remains challenging. The challenges are mainly due to insufficient security, difficulties in paying salaries and the lack of equipment.

Fourthly, as the configuration committed to fostering coherence among stakeholders, we strongly support the African initiative that brings together all peace efforts under the Libreville road map, based on their comparative advantages. While maintaining security outside of Bangui remains a challenge, dialogue initiatives at the local level with armed groups have proceeded with support from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic towards violence reduction and reconciliation. We look forward to seeing that initiative contribute to the implementation and success of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration process.

The development and implementation of a realistic and clear reconciliation strategy is a top priority for 2018. The creation of the truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation commission announced during the 2015 Bangui Forum has been slow to be activated. It is important that this structure be operationalized to reassure victims waiting for justice pending the start of trials by the Special Criminal Court.

Fifthly, and finally, economic recovery will be key to maintaining faith in State institutions and overcoming the humanitarian crisis. It is encouraging that President Touadéra has prioritized development efforts in the north, where perceptions of marginalization have fuelled conflict. Addressing such horizontal inequalities will be critically important to sustain peace.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Central African authorities for their commitment to the implementation of the activities of the configuration. I would also like to thank the members of the configuration, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Onanga-Anyanga and his team, as well as the Peacebuilding Support Office for its tireless efforts in support of the people of the Central African Republic.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ambassador Hilale for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Tanoh-Boutchoue.

**Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to brief the members of the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic. In my statement, I intend to provide an overview of the Committee's work since my predecessor last briefed the Council on 15 February 2017 (see S/PV.7884), and in so doing highlight the activities of the Committee and the Panel of Experts.

Over the course of 2017, there were a number of positive developments in the Central African Republic, including the start of political consultations within the framework of the African Union initiative and the progress achieved in engaging representatives of armed groups in disarmament and demobilization and security sector reform. Despite all those advances, however, the heightened level of violence in the south-east and north-west last year has reminded us of the worst developments in the country in 2013 and 2014, with the number of internally displaced persons and refugees reaching unprecedented levels, while civilians, Blue Helmets and humanitarian actors have been regularly attacked by predatory armed groups.

Since my predecessor's last briefing, the Committee has convened a total of eight meetings — on 23 February, 31 March, 12 May, 21 July, 6 September, 4 and 29 December 2017 and 26 January 2018. While press releases summarizing those meetings are available on the Committee's webpage, I wish to highlight several activities of the Committee that speak to the implementation of sanction measures.

The Committee has continued to work closely with the Central African authorities, regional and neighbouring States, and, on 6 September and 26 January, convened its first open briefings, which were available to all Member States. Those open briefings have proven to be very useful and engaging, and have provided Committee members and the invited regional States with an opportunity to hear the views of the broader membership of the Organization on how to enhance the implementation of sanctions by regional States and those neighbouring the Central African Republic. Most important, though, they have allowed us to see the complete picture on the ways in which we can address cross-border arms trafficking and trafficking in natural resources.

It is clear to me that regional cooperation among neighbouring States in countering illicit networks, the illegal exploitation of natural resources and cross-border trafficking in arms and ammunition is key in

addressing many challenges that countries in Central Africa face. However, without the sanctions regime and other assistance being provided by the international community, those steps may fall short in efficiently eradicating the root causes of the conflict.

In that regard, I would also like to highlight the outstanding work of the United Nations Mine Action Service in ensuring the safe and effective management of weapons and ammunition in the Central African Republic, improving weapons and ammunition storage facilities and building permanent armouries outside Bangui. The Mine Action Service briefed the Committee twice in 2017, on 17 May and again on 4 December, regarding its assistance to the Central African authorities in the implementation of the 2017-2018 small arms road map aimed at developing a national strategy and action plan. On 4 December, the Committee received a briefing for the first time from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, which provided preliminary findings of its report on weapons and ammunition management that is expected to be published by the end of March.

I also wish to underline the work of the members of the Panel of Experts, who are the eyes and ears of the Committee on the ground. Thanks to the Panel's reporting — namely, its midterm and final report, as well as its progress updates, the most recent of which was circulated on 9 February — the Committee is well informed in connection with the implementation of the sanctions measures in the Central African Republic and the region. In that respect, it is important to note that, on 17 May 2017, the Committee added the name of one individual, Abdoulaye Hissène, to its sanctions list. I would also like to emphasize that in 2017, the Panel of Experts submitted three new statements of cases for possible sanctions designation as well as two updated statements. To date, the Panel has submitted a total of 32 statements.

On 29 December, in an example of the Committee's cooperation with the Central African Republic's national authorities, the Committee heard briefings on the implementation of the arms embargo via video teleconference in Bangui from the Ministers of National Defence and Interior and Public Security and from representatives of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the European Union Training Mission in Mali and the Panel of Experts. While fully recognizing and understanding the Central African Republic authorities' legitimate efforts to rearm the national defence and security forces, the Committee also stresses the secure and safe management of arms and ammunition.

During the reporting period, the Committee also worked closely with the Central African Republic, States of the region and other Member States to provide guidance on implementing the arms embargo. In that regard, the Committee and the Panel of Experts are committed to further dialogue with the national authorities in order to ensure that the arms embargo can be seen to be helping the Government to rearm the defence and security forces while fully complying with its provisions. The ongoing deterioration in the security situation, particularly in the south-eastern and north-western areas of the country, along with the easy availability of arms and ammunition, makes effective implementation of the embargo essential.

With regard to the travel ban, the Committee and the Panel of Experts have continued to actively engage with regional States, particularly Kenya and Ethiopia, in following up on reported violations, while emphasizing that appropriate exemption procedures aimed at promoting mediation activities may be used ahead of the proposed travel in accordance with the sanctions measures, as detailed in resolution 2339 (2017) and the Committee Guidelines. In that regard, I would particularly like to thank the Kenyan authorities for having communicated reliable evidence to the Panel of Experts indicating that a sanctioned individual, Mr. François Bozizé, has been travelling under a different name, which has just been added to the sanctions list. I would therefore like to urge the Central African Republic authorities and all States of the region to fully implement the sanctions measures, including by ensuring that fraudulent, counterfeit, stolen or lost passports, as well as invalidated diplomatic passports, are removed from circulation, as requested in paragraph 12 of resolution 2399 (2018).

Turning to the assets freeze, in its final report the Panel of Experts highlighted the fact that Chad had frozen the assets of the listed individual Abdoulaye Hissène, while noting once again that the Central African Republic authorities have still not frozen the accounts and assets of Alfred Yékatom and Eugène Ngaïkosset. According to the Panel of Experts, the Central African Republic authorities have also continued paying Yékatom and Ngaïkosset's salaries, in violation of the assets freeze. On behalf of the Committee, I once again urge the authorities to fully

implement the sanctions measures and immediately freeze the assets of the individuals in question.

In conclusion, I would like to inform the Council that this year I intend to visit the Central African Republic and several States of the region in order to be able to talk directly and frankly with the appropriate officials on the ground, convey the importance of ensuring that the sanctions measures are fully implemented and outline the relevant exemption procedures.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Tenya** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the convening of this meeting. We would like to thank Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and the other briefers for their presentations.

Peru is committed to maintaining and sustaining peace in the Central African Republic. We contribute to MINUSCA through our deployment of a division of engineers from our armed forces, which gives us yet another reason to follow the situation in the Central African Republic with special attention. The humanitarian crisis remains urgent and the deteriorating security situation in most of the country has hindered consolidation of the modest progress that has been made in the political process. With that in mind, I would like to discuss three specific aspects that require our attention:

The first is the urgent need to end the violence. We are concerned about the permanent state of conflict in most of the country, the inter-ethnic violence, the attacks on the civilian population, MINUSCA personnel and humanitarian workers, and about armed groups' access to weapons. To that must be added the clashes over the control of various areas and the exploitation of natural resources. Transhumance corridors have become spaces for illegal business and crime. We commend the efforts of MINUSCA and the European Union to help build military and police forces capable of dealing with these threats, and we emphasize the importance of advancing programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

My second point is the importance of reconstructing and consolidating the State and extending its presence throughout the country. That in turn implies the importance of promoting a peaceful, inclusive society focused on sustainable peace and development. In that regard, we welcome the efforts of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, launched by the African Union, which has been facilitating dialogue between armed groups and civil society. We believe that it should include groups of women and young people, with a view to establishing institutions oriented towards sustainable peace. We also consider the consideration of the issue of incitement to violence by resolution 2399 (2018) — the most recent resolution on sanctions for the Central African Republic — to be a positive step.

We emphasize the importance of arriving at agreements and commitments that will enable progress to be made in implementing the plan for expanding the prefectures with a view to improving the country's stability, security and development. One of the underlying causes of the conflict in the Central African Republic is the difficult socioeconomic reality, which contributes to its instability. It will be crucial to to find ways to create jobs, particularly for young people, order to prevent extremism and relapses into violence. The international community should therefore support the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan.

My third point is the importance of doing more to protect the civilian population. We recognize the efforts of the Central African Republic authorities to strengthen the judicial system and combat impunity, particularly their authorization of the Special C"iminal Court. However, we deplore the recurrent shameful violations of human rights in the country. Firm action must be taken to investigate and prosecute abuses in that regard, including sexual violence and the widespread participation of children in the conflict.

Peru acknowledges and supports the work that MINUSCA is doing to protect civilians and provide humanitarian assistance, as well as its efforts to uphold the political process, despite the adverse environment and complex operational situations that may arise.

We believe that the Mission's operational capacities should be strengthened. We note with concern that 100 per cent of the authorized force has not yet been deployed, and stress the need to ensure the safety of the Blue Helmets on the ground. In that regard, and finally, we wish to express our support for the Secretary-

General's decision to address this problem, which is a cross-cutting issue in many peace operations.

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is grateful for the report of the Secretary-General presented by Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) (S/2018/125), to whom we extend our sincere congratulations for the commendable and noble work he is doing in Central Africa. We also wish to extend these congratulations to the entire MINUSCA team. We also thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, Special Representative of the African Union for Central Africa, and Lieutenant General Esa Pulkkinen, Director of Military Planning and Conduct Capability of the European Union, for participating in today's meeting.

We also thank and welcome Ambassador Bernard Tanoh-Boutchoue of Côte d'Ivoire, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013), concerning the Central African Republic, and Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission's configuration for Central Africa, for their briefings. Both provided us with a clear illustration of the current situation in this brotherly country of ours, the Central African Republic.

Having heard the briefings, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea expresses its concern at the current atmosphere of violence being fomented by some armed groups in the country, which affects not only the parties to the conflict but also has a serious impact on the civilian population, in particular the most vulnerable segments — women and children — thereby further aggravating the critical humanitarian situation, weakening the State and facilitating the unrestrained activity of mafias in plundering its natural resources throughout the country. In that context, Equatorial Guinea condemns the recent attacks perpetrated by the previously mentioned armed groups against on civilians and MINUSCA and expresses its deep regret at the loss of human lives, both of MINUSCA personnel and Central African citizens who have been victims of the consequences of the violence.

Despite the outstanding progress and success of the elections in March 2016, as well as the United Nations presence to strengthen stability, support the Government and provide humanitarian assistance, the Central African Republic continues to suffer from unrest and instability, resulting in the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, giving rise to hundreds of victims — men, women and children — who have been subjected to sexual violence, trafficking in persons, arrests, detentions and displacement. Equatorial Guinea calls on all armed groups to lay down their arms and appeals to the parties to the conflict to renounce all sectarian interests so as to allow for a dialogue leading to peacebuilding and the stabilization of the country. Equatorial Guinea re-emphasizes the need for strict monitoring of the tripartite agreement signed on 23 May 2011 in Khartoum.

Equatorial Guinea welcomes the efforts of the Government of the brotherly Central African Republic, under the leadership of President Touadera, in concert with the international community, aimed at State-building after the conclusion of the political transition. Those efforts involve disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation and also involve reform of the security and defence forces. The ultimate goal is to achieve national reconciliation and stability.

The Central African Republic will achieve the desired stability if it is able to make a genuine national reconciliation effort through frank, direct and inclusive political dialogue. It is important for all the stakeholders involved to act by putting their country's supreme interests first; only in that way can lasting peace and stability be achieved.

Although much progress has been made in the right direction, much remains to be done to rebuild the country. The role of the international community is particularly crucial in enhancing what the African Union and regional structures, particularly the Economic Community of Central African States, can do in this process. MINUSCA is also instrumental in that regard, and its results have been very positive.

Stability in Central Africa implies stability for the entire Central African region, which is why the region's top leaders have been extensively involved in the search for a solution, including sending forces when the situation has required it. Equatorial Guinea has been no exception: for a long time, His Excellency President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has been involved

in assistance and mediation efforts in conjunction with all stakeholders.

**Mr. Tachauste Jordán** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/125) presented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, and we take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for its recommendations. We also take this opportunity to thank all of today's briefers.

The ongoing violence promoted by the armed groups, the asymmetrical attacks and the constant inter-ethnic and intercommunal confrontations driven by the competition to exert control over the territory and its natural resources show that work still needs to be done in the area of security and are factors that aggravate the critical humanitarian situation on a daily basis. According to the latest report of the Secretary-General, approximately 50 per cent of the population in that country depends on outside assistance to survive, and 2.5 million Central Africans require urgent humanitarian assistance, 100,000 more than in the previous period. The number of internally displaced persons increased by 70 per cent in 2017, reaching a total of 1.2 million people, the highest rate in the history of the Central African Republic. Food insecurity has increased and currently affects one out of every two people. Approximately 500 schools closed at the end of 2017 due to insecurity, including in some regions where there are now no schools open. That is why we are calling on the international community to continue its support so as to address the population's growing need for the humanitarian assistance and provide financing that is predictable and sustainable.

Furthermore, Bolivia condemns the constant attacks perpetrated by armed groups against civilians, MINUSCA and the peacekeeping forces. We value and salute the members of the Mission — the military, police and civilian personnel — who are working in a volatile and high-risk environment. We commend the Mission's efforts to identify regions where additional capacity is needed to protect the civilian population, in particular its strategy for the prevention of violence in connection with migration. In that regard, and in order to increase their efficiency, we encourage them to implement the recommendations of the internal report regarding the special investigation concerning the protection of civilians, so that they may effectively carry out their mandate in accordance with resolution 2387 (2017). We also reiterate that sexual exploitation and abuse are unacceptable, and we support MINUSCA in continuing its efforts to ensure compliance with the zero-tolerance policy.

Despite the complicated context of the security situation, we highlight the progress in the protection of civilians, the strengthening of State authority, inter-institutional cooperation, the training of the Central African armed forces, inter alia. Such activities genuinely strengthen the peace process, and should be built upon and fully implemented.

Similarly, we highlight the new prefectural administration, the approval of the national budget for 2018 and the development of a strategic framework for security sector reform. We commend the Government of the Central African Republic, led by President Touadéra, on its quest for reconciliation, inclusive dialogue and understanding among the parties. We also welcome ongoing efforts to restore the court system and the progress made to end impunity, including the condemnation of armed groups, the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court, the demilitarization of the prison system and the development of a strategic framework for security sector reform. We reiterate the importance of equal participation in all these areas and within the overall peace process.

We condemn all acts to incite violence — in particular on ethnic or religious grounds — that undermine peace, stability and security in the Central African Republic. Once again, we call on all armed groups to lay down their weapons, put aside sectarian interests of all kinds that hinder fruitful dialogue, and reach agreements that are in the interests of the civilian population and the stability of the country. In addition, we call on them to fully commit to the process of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration.

We urge the Central African Republic to implement its national programme on demobilization, disarmament and reintegration. We underscore the efforts of and the support provided by MINUSCA and the United Nations Mine Action Service. We highlight the work of both entities in the area of humanitarian demining.

In conclusion, we welcome the active and ongoing support of regional and subregional organizations, the participation of the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the panel of facilitators of the African Initiative for Peace and

Reconciliation, whose political efforts towards peace and cooperation are of paramount importance to the process of reconciliation, with strict respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Central African Republic. Central Africans are primarily responsible for achieving peace and stability in their country.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

**Ms. Kpongo** (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Kuwait on assuming the presidency of the Security Council in February, as this is the first time I am taking the floor during its mandate.

I am pleased to take part in today's Security Council meeting in order to, first, thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for his briefing, and, secondly, to sincerely thank the Mission for its ongoing efforts to restore peace to a country struggling to recover after such a protracted crisis. I also thank all who spoke for their important statements.

The end of the political transition and the organization of credible and democratic elections granted us the freedom to hope. Life began again. We all welcomed the noteworthy progress observed in various areas but then, as if by magic, inter-community and ethnic violence broke out almost all over the country. After reading the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/125), I said to myself that the country was not far from the relapse into conflict we all feared. We concluded that 2017 was the most critical year, with threats that could have led to a tipping point.

We welcome the joint operation carried out by MINUSCA and the Forces armées centrafricaines, which reduced the number of armed groups in areas around Paoua. We encourage such military action in all areas where it is needed, as it could ease tensions among the warring parties and reduce the threat posed by them over the long term. It is clear that rivalries between armed groups and self-defence militias exacerbate and sustain violence.

Opportunistic political leaders do not desire an end to the crisis. They use all means at their disposal, such as manipulation, to encourage armed groups and self-defence militias, who are paid by them, to commit all kinds of abuses against the civilian population and the Blue Helmets and to spread hate speech, with the sole aim of dividing Central Africans in an effort to better control the situation.

My delegation welcomes the fact that incitement to violence and inflammatory rhetoric were included as designation criteria in resolution 2399 (2018) on extending the sanctions regime against the Central African Republic. We hope that such measures will have the desired effect. To that end, the Central African Government and MINUSCA must implement resolution 2399 (2018) without delay so that troublemakers know they will be brought to justice.

Resolution 2387 (2017) of 14 November 2017 confers other major duties on MINUSCA, such as providing support to local peace initiatives and to consultations conducted by the panel of facilitators of the African initiative with the main armed groups, civil society and other actors in the Central African crisis. The Council must ensure that the Mission has substantial means commensurate with the ever-increasing number of duties entrusted to it.

In conclusion, given that we do not have enough time to address the other aspects of the situation, I would like to reiterate my delegation's gratitude for the excellent cooperation between the Government of the Central African Republic and MINUSCA in their attempts to manage this complex situation. We sincerely thank the Head of the Mission, Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, for his commitment and determination to help the Government and the people of the Central African Republic to emerge from this protracted nightmare. We also thank all of our bilateral and international partners for their unwavering support.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.8188

# Security Council

Seventy-third year

*Provisional*

**8188**th meeting

Saturday, 24 February 2018, noon

New York

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|---|---|---|
| *President*: | Mr. Alotaibi | (Kuwait) |
| *Members*: | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mr. Inchauste Jordán |
| | China | Mr. Ma Zhaoxu |
| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue |
| | Equatorial Guinea | Mr. Ndong Mba |
| | Ethiopia | Mr. Alemu |
| | France | Mr. Delattre |
| | Kazakhstan | Mr. Umarov |
| | Netherlands | Mr. Van Oosterom |
| | Peru | Mr. Meza-Cuadra |
| | Poland | Ms. Wronecka |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Nebenzia |
| | Sweden | Mr. Skoog |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Hickey |
| | United States of America | Mrs. Haley |

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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*The meeting was called to order at 2.10 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Middle East**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/146, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I now give the floor to members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

**Mr. Skoog** (Sweden): Sweden and Kuwait earlier this week put forward a draft resolution to respond to the desperate calls of the United Nations and the humanitarian community in Syria for a cessation of hostilities for an initial period of 30 days, in order to allow for much-needed humanitarian relief. We have been working intensely with all Council members to operationalize the concrete requests of the United Nations, the humanitarian community and, above, all the civilian population on the ground. We have done our utmost to accommodate Council members' concerns. It is now time for the Council to unanimously shoulder its responsibility and show that meaningful action is possible.

The key components in our draft resolution are a nationwide cessation of hostilities for at least 30 days, weekly United Nations humanitarian aid convoys to all areas in need, and immediate emergency medical evacuations. The United Nations convoys and evacuation teams are ready to go. The draft resolution also calls for the immediate lifting of sieges of populated areas, including eastern Ghouta. It reiterates its demand, reminding in particular the Syrian authorities that all parties have an obligation to act in accordance with international law to protect civilians and hospitals and other medical facilities.

The draft makes an exception for military operations directed against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida, the Al-Nusra Front and other terrorist groups designated by the Security Council. This in no way relieves the parties to the conflict in Syria from upholding their obligations under international law at all times, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

The draft resolution is not a comprehensive peace deal on Syria; its aim is purely humanitarian. There are already ceasefire agreements in force for the areas where fighting has escalated the most. They need to be complied with. There are existing monitoring mechanisms that can be utilized. The role of the Council is to push the parties to the conflict to comply with the proposed cessation of hostilities in order to urgently enable needed alleviation of suffering for the people of Syria. If the draft resolution is adopted today, it can de-escalate violence, save lives, alleviate suffering and break the deadlock on humanitarian access and sieges.

Since the first call for a cessation of hostilities, the situation has gotten dramatically worse, particularly in eastern Ghouta, as we have heard from the Secretary-General and from Under-Secretary-General Mark Lowcock. After seven years of war, the situation for innocent civilians in Syria has never been worse. But we have an opportunity to turn things around today to avert the disaster unfolding before our eyes.

The draft resolution before the Council represents a resolute and very urgent attempt for the Council to take decisive and meaningful action. Today, we count on each and every member to do the right thing.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour*:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2401 (2018).

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Kuwait.

I associate myself with the statement just made by the Permanent Representative of Sweden on our behalf.

The unanimous adoption today of resolution 2401 (2018), following lengthy and intensive negotiations, demonstrates that the penholders, Kuwait and Sweden, are keen to ensure unanimity on this important humanitarian resolution. The resolution renews hope in the Security Council's ability to be unified and speak in one voice, sending a clear and explicit message that it rejects any violations of the Charter of the United Nations.

I wish to thank all Member States that voted in favour of the resolution, which includes key and specific demands in response to the appeals of the international community, the most important of which are as follows. First, it demands that all parties cease fire without delay throughout Syria for a minimum of 30 days. Secondly, it allows the United Nations and its partners to immediately undertake medical evacuations safely and unconditionally. Thirdly, it requires all parties to ensure the unimpeded and safe access of all humanitarian and medical workers. Fourthly, it calls on all parties to lift the siege of populated areas, including eastern Ghouta.

We are totally convinced that, while the resolution may not end the humanitarian suffering in Syria at once, it is a positive message that the Council today is solidary and united to end this humanitarian suffering and hostilities right away. The biggest task now is to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the resolution in order to save civilian lives in Syria and deliver their humanitarian needs immediately.

The Security Council still has a great deal to do so as to end this tragic crisis in Syria, which is about to complete its seventh year. The resolution that we have adopted today is only an interim solution, as a political solution in Syria is the only way to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the crisis and meet the aspirations of the brotherly Syrian people, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 2254 (2015) and the 2012 Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex).

The State of Kuwait stresses the importance of reaching an agreement among Council members to prevent any attempt to obstruct a draft resolution aimed at stopping flagrant violations of human rights. Kuwait supports the code of conduct proposed by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group, whereby Council members would pledge not to obstruct draft resolutions that address crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. We also support the Mexican-French initiative calling on restraint in the use of the veto in the event of serious violations of human rights, based on our commitments to abide by the four Geneva Conventions and their Protocols, international humanitarian law and the outcomes of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit.

We call for engagement on general humanitarian issues, such as the delivery of humanitarian aid, the evacuation of the sick and injured, and humanitarian truce, as procedural issues. In order to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies and the great suffering of humankind, the veto must not be used in such instances.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the other members of the Council that wish to make statements.

**Mrs. Haley** (United States of America): I want to thank the penholders, Sweden and Kuwait, for their work, their sacrifice and their time in the negotiations. As we look at the negotiations, I think it is also important that we bring the Council some of the voices of the Syrian people in eastern Ghouta, who have suffered so much while waiting for the Security Council to act.

A doctor treating patients in a makeshift hospital described the conditions she is facing: "We are mental and emotional wrecks. There is nothing more we can do. We are bled dry." In a haunting video, the doctor walks into a room with a crying mother as she says,

> "I am waiting for my son to die. At least he will be free of pain. I was just making bread for him when the roof fell in. He is going straight to heaven. At least in heaven there is food."

Another message we received yesterday which I think was relayed to Council members in the closed consultations, but which I think it is important to repeat again — was an emergency call from a doctor in eastern Ghouta, who said:

> "We have a horrible situation here. We are being targeted with all kinds of weapons, non-stop. We lack everything: water, food, medical supplies,

shelter. This is a disaster. Everyone is just waiting to die."

Today, the Security Council finally took a step towards addressing these devastating levels of human suffering in Syria. The United States wants nothing more than to see the ceasefire in resolution 2401 (2018) implemented immediately across the country. It is critical that the Al-Assad regime and its allies comply with our demand to stop the assault on eastern Ghouta and immediately allow food and medicine to reach everyone who needs it. All of us on the Council must do our part to press the Al-Assad regime as hard as we can to comply.

But we are late to respond to this crisis — very late. On Wednesday, the Secretary-General made an emotional plea for an immediate ceasefire in Syria to allow the very basic necessities to get to the people. Kuwait and Sweden had a version of the resolution ready to go for a vote, but Russia called for a delay. On Thursday, in an effort to stall, Russia called for an open meeting on the humanitarian situation in Syria. At that meeting (S/PV.8186), 14 members of the Council were ready to impose a ceasefire, but Russia obstructed the vote again. And then yesterday, the Council sat around for hours, ready to vote, only to have Russia delay it again.

Every minute the Council waited on Russia, the human suffering grew. Getting to a vote became a moral responsibility for everyone, but not for Russia, not for Syria, and not for Iran. I have to ask: why? At least 19 health facilities have been bombed since Sunday. As they dragged out the negotiations, the bombs from Al-Assad's fighter jets continued to fall. In the three days it took us to adopt the resolution, how many mothers lost their kids to the bombing and the shelling? How many more images did we need to see of fathers holding their dead children? All for nothing, because here we are voting for a ceasefire that could have saved lives days ago.

And after all of this time, hardly anything has changed in the resolution except a few words and some commas. The Syrian people should not have to die waiting for Russia to organize its instructions from Moscow or to discuss them with the Syrians. Why did the Council allow this? There is no good reason we should not have done this Wednesday, or Thursday, or Friday. We may not know the faces that we are talking about. We may not know their names, or these people, but they know us. And we all failed them this week. I guess there is unity in that.

Today, Russia has belatedly decided to join the international consensus and accept the need to call for a ceasefire, but only after trying every possible way to avoid it. The resolution marks a moment of Council unity that we must seize and maintain beyond the 30-day timeframe. We hope that the resolution will be a turning point, where Russia will join us in pushing for a political settlement to this conflict and take action to re-establish real accountability for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Progress starts by adhering to the ceasefire with no excuses. After so many years of defying the Council's demands, the Al-Assad regime must change course. None of us should be so naïve as to accept that the Al-Assad regime can continue indiscriminately bombing schools, hospitals and homes under the fake excuse of "counter-terrorism". Al-Assad's bombing must stop. The ceasefire must be given a chance to work. We look to the Al-Assad regime's backers, especially Russia and Iran, to address what the Secretary-General rightly called a "hell on Earth". All eyes will now be on the Syrian regime, Iran and Russia.

Our goal with this resolution is clear. The Al-Assad regime needs to stop its military activities around eastern Ghouta, and for once allow humanitarian access to all of those who need it. We are deeply skeptical that the regime will comply, but we supported the resolution because we must demand nothing less. We owe that to the innocent people of Syria begging for help.

In the days to come, our resolve to stand by our demands in the resolution will be tested. All of us must rise to the challenge of maintaining this ceasefire, just as we came together today. All of us must do everything we can to make the demands of the resolution a reality. That is the only way to restore the credibility of the Council. The Syrian people have been waiting long enough.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Following lengthy consultations, during which the overwhelming majority of delegations demonstrated a sincere focus on seeking joint solutions — for which we thank them — the Security Council has unanimously adopted the humanitarian resolution 2401 (2018), on Syria. I wish to particularly thank the penholders, the Permanent Representatives of Kuwait and Sweden, for their tireless efforts

and resolve to reach a compromise up until the very last moment. Russia supports the resolution because it encourages the Syrian parties to work as quickly as possible to bring a halt to the hostilities, comply with previous agreed-on decisions in that regard, engage in negotiations on a general de-escalation and establish extended humanitarian pauses throughout the country.

The reason it took us so long to reach agreement on the resolution was because we did not support the directives it included for an immediate cessation of hostilities for a relatively long period, and the reason for that was simply because it was unachievable in that form. A ceasefire would not have happened if we had adopted the directives without any concrete agreement between the warring parties, and any approach so removed from reality would definitely not help to address the pressing humanitarian problems in Syria. It will be crucial to ensure that the Security Council's demands are reinforced by concrete agreements on the ground.

It would be naive to think that any of these complicated issues can be resolved overnight. We trust that all the external stakeholders with influence will work to bring that about. We can see that some foreign sponsors of the illegal armed groups have either fallen very short in that regard or have been deliberately flouting their obligations. Russia is working with all the parties to the conflict and doing everything possible to normalize the situation and actively assist the humanitarian efforts. Iran and Turkey, our partners in the Astana process, have taken on a major part of the work, and we are preparing for an important meeting in the Astana format next month. In the southern de-escalation zone a fairly decent level of cooperation has been established with Jordan and the United States, although we have been seeing tension rising in some areas owing to activity by armed groups.

The resolution clearly states that it does not apply to military operations against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Jabhat Al-Nusra, other Al-Qaida-affiliated organizations and various groups that the Security Council has recognized as terrorists. That struggle that will continue. We call on international stakeholders to coordinate closely on this issue, including with the Syrian authorities, and in strict compliance with international law and with respect for Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The goal of combating terrorism must not become a pretext for solving this or that geopolitical issue of dubious legitimacy, which is exactly what the United States is doing in Syria.

Instead of being drowned in rhetoric about Russia — and by the way, next time I am going to count the number of times Ambassador Haley mentions my country — what we are insisting on is a prompt end to the occupation-style efforts of the so-called coalition, which, among other things, would have a definite humanitarian impact, enabling the Syrian Government to address the issue of restoring normal life in all the areas that have been liberated from terrorists, including in the north and the east of the country. Closing the coalition's Al-Tanf military base would solve the problem of the internally displaced persons in the Rukban camp. In that connection, we would also like to point out that every effort should be made to deliver aid via the most direct routes, as provided for in the humanitarian resolutions on Syria.

It is important that today's resolution calls for speeding up the immediate deployment of humanitarian mine-clearing operations throughout Syria. It also reiterates the demand that all parties demilitarize medical facilities, schools and other civilian infrastructure and refrain from establishing military positions in residential areas, something that the illegal armed groups have frequently been guilty of. The conflict's flashpoints are more clearly identified, and are not limited to eastern Ghouta and Idlib, and that includes Raqqa, which the coalition has laid waste. It also expresses indignation at the militias' shelling of Damascus, in which our Embassy has been hit several times. We know that the humanitarian situation in Syria is dire and in urgent need of effective measures, but we can see perfectly well that the propagandistic picture being painted of eastern Ghouta is identical to the loud campaign in late 2016 during the counter-terrorist operation to liberate eastern Aleppo. We must engage not just with eastern Ghouta, but with Raqqa, Rukban, Foah, Kefraya and Yarmouk. Every area of Syria should get help.

The resolution emphasizes the importance of supporting the restoration of stability in the areas that civilians are returning to, which in our view sends an unambiguous message to those capitals that continue to make restoration assistance conditional on a specific transitional direction in the political process. It stipulates that the humanitarian priorities for Syria in 2018 are not limited to Under-Secretary-General Lowcock's five requests. The agenda is far broader. We

hope in particular that the specialized United Nations agencies and their partners will be sensitive to requests from the Syrian authorities.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep concern about the public statements by certain United States officials threatening aggression against Syria, a sovereign country. This is a warning that we will not countenance any arbitrary interpretation of the resolution that has just been adopted. We demand an end to this irresponsible and hateful rhetoric. Rather, there should be joint efforts to settle the conflict in Syria on the basis of resolution 2254 (2015).

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2401 (2018), which demands that a cessation of hostilities be established without delay throughout Syria, in order to enable humanitarian personnel to evacuate the wounded and to gain access to the population. The negotiations were arduous. However, despite their differences in approach, the members of the Security Council managed to prevail in the name of the humanitarian imperative. The resolution is vital in the true meaning of that word, since halting the shelling and evacuating the wounded are matters of life and death for thousands of Syrian people, especially in eastern Ghouta, which has been under siege by the Damascus regime for days. I would like to thank the delegations of Kuwait and Sweden — which introduced the resolution, with our support — for their efforts, perseverance and outstanding work in arriving at a robust text.

As by President Macron and the Secretary-General forcefully recalled last Wednesday, it is imperative and urgent to end the shelling of eastern Ghouta, Idlib and the whole of Syrian territory immediately. That was the thrust of yesterday's joint call by President Macron and Chancellor Angela Merkel to President Putin during their demanding and close conversation on the issue. It is also the reason for our vote today. The resolution is the outcome of our concerted efforts, as well as a belated response to the violence unleashed against civilians in eastern Ghouta and elsewhere.

Let us make no mistake: a cessation of hostilities for an initial 30 days to enable humanitarian access to meet vital urgent needs is only the very first step. It is the minimal response to the repeated demands of both the United Nations and humanitarian actors, which have been conveyed for months by Council members, in particular by France.

It is now up to the regime's supporters to ensure full compliance with the cessation of hostilities without delay and to respond to all requests for access to humanitarian assistance and medical evacuations in accordance with the text we have just adopted. We specifically call on the guarantors of the Astana process to assume their responsibilities and effectively ensure that the Syrian regime immediately cease its hostilities and ensure respect for the basic principles and rules of international humanitarian law and human rights law. It is urgent that humanitarian assistance reach without delay the people who need it. Every minute counts because every minute can lead to the loss of lives.

Nothing would be worse than to see this resolution remain a dead letter. That is why France will be extremely vigilant on all those points over the coming hours and days.

We all know that a return to stability in Syria is the only way to put a definitive end to the humanitarian crisis, for which a political solution is required. More than ever, therefore, we must redouble our efforts to establish a neutral environment that will enable a credible political process and elections to be held in Syria, as part of the Geneva process and resolution 2254 (2015). France is ready to continue working tirelessly with its partners to that end.

As we said yesterday in this forum, the elements for a regional and potentially major international confrontation have coalesced today. That is a risk that must be taken very seriously. We must therefore come together, as we have done today, to put an end to the humanitarian catastrophe under way, prevent a spillover of the conflict and seek an inclusive political solution in Syria. These are three indissociable priorities, and our generation will be judged on whether or not we are able to put an end to the Syrian tragedy.

This text is a potentially important step, but it is obviously not the end of the road. Let us be frank: the hardest part has yet to be done. Therefore, on behalf of France, I would like to launch a two-pronged appeal.

The first is a call for the resolution to be fully and immediately implemented. We are all aware that pitfalls and obstacles abound. This is a reflection of the extent to which resolute and coordinated engagement by all members of the Security Council is crucial to ensuring that the provisions we have just adopted are implemented on the ground without delay. To put it even more clearly: if we do not put all our resources

and energy behind the full implementation of this resolution, we know that it will not work. Above all, that applies to Russia and the Astana guarantors.

The second call is to use this truce as leverage to put an end to the spiral of violence in the Syrian tragedy and create positive momentum towards an inclusive political settlement in Syria. That must be our common ambition. There is a glimmer of hope today in that regard. Let us seize this fragile moment to begin to reverse the course of events, despite the magnitude of the difficulties ahead. As the Council knows, France is fully committed to that goal.

**Mr. Hickey** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2401 (2018). In particular, we applaud your work, Mr. President, together with Sweden, as co-penholders.

But this is not a moment for self-congratulation. It has taken us far too long to agree this resolution. While we have been arguing over commas, Al-Assad's planes have been killing more civilians in their homes and in their hospitals, imposing unbearable suffering. Despite the amount of time we have spent in this Chamber over many years discussing the devastating humanitarian crisis, we have still not been able to achieve the peace and security that the Syrian people so desperately need.

As the conflict enters its eighth year, the situation in eastern Ghouta and elsewhere in the country is far worse than we ever thought imaginable. The barbarity and depravity of the Al-Assad regime shows no limits. We must never lose sight of the fact that the pictures we see and the stories we hear from this comfortable Chamber are the agonizing reality for hundreds of thousands of civilians — for men, women and children who are being forced to eke out an existence underground to avoid being killed by a regime that commits daily atrocities against its own people.

I have heard some say that the information about the situation in eastern Ghouta is propaganda. A doctor in eastern Ghouta, having heard such comments, said this morning:

> "Amid the chaos and the bombs, it is the not being believed that almost hurts the most. We are dying here every day. And when people say that they do not believe us, that is pain upon pain."

This is not propaganda. It is a living hell for hundreds of thousands of residents of eastern Ghouta. As we have repeated many times, the intentional and systematic targeting of civilians and civilian objects not only violates international humanitarian law, it is a war crime. The United Kingdom will be unrelenting in our campaign to ensure accountability.

By having voted in favour of the resolution today, we are standing up and saying that we will not stand by and let this happen. In the face of escalating violence, devastation and suffering, we must all now take practical steps to improve the situation for those living and dying in a hell of one man's making. The resolution demonstrates our resolve to put a stop to the brutal violence. It demands that all parties cease hostilities without delay. That means right now, immediately.

The role and responsibility of the Council does not end with the adoption of this resolution, quite the opposite. All States Members of the United Nations, but particularly Council members, must now take responsibility for ensuring that the resolution is implemented in full, without delay.

The resolution calls for the Council to review its implementation within 15 days, but we must all be active in supporting and monitoring implementation from the moment we step out of the Chamber. If we see any of the parties violating the terms of the resolution, we must bring it back to the Council immediately.

Those with any influence over the Syrian regime — Russia, Iran — have a particular responsibility to ensure that the ceasefire is respected in full and without delay, that all sieges are ended and that humanitarian aid is delivered. This is the absolute minimum that the people of Syria deserve.

As much as we welcome the adoption of this resolution today, it is only a small step. Just as one aid convoy in three months to a besieged area cannot even begin to address the humanitarian crisis, one resolution alone cannot solve the situation in Syria. We must do everything in our collective power to ensure that this resolution is effective in delivering for those whom we have failed to date. We must all send a clear message to the Al-Assad regime: abandon your attempt to pursue a military strategy, stop fighting and engage seriously in United Nations-led political talks in Geneva.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the words of my Foreign Secretary. The entire world is looking at the Al-Assad regime, Russia and Iran. They hold the keys not only to the end of this obscene conflict, but to the safety, humanitarian aid and basic medical treatment

that is being denied to millions of people right now in Syria. For the mother giving birth underground in eastern Ghouta, for the child unable to learn as schools are closed for yet another day, for the doctor battling air strikes to treat patients in Idlib — all of us sitting here today owe it to the people of Syria to work together with renewed and unyielding energy to achieve a political solution that will bring peace to the Syrian people.

**Mr. Ma Zhaoxu** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The recent escalation of conflict in the affected areas of Syria has caught the attention of the international community. We acutely feel the suffering of the Syrian people as if it were inflicted upon us. China condemns all acts of violence that target civilians and civilian property and destroy innocent lives. China welcomes the Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2401 (2018), which is the result of Council members' patient consultation and hard work to find consensus. The resolution includes positive elements such as calling for respect for Syria's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity; demanding a cessation of hostilities by all parties; easing the humanitarian situation in Syria; supporting mine action throughout Syria; and continuing to combat terrorism.

As an active party to the consultation process, China made unflagging efforts and played a constructive role in facilitating consensus-building in the Council. China appreciates that, thanks to the concerted efforts of all parties concerned, the Council arrived at a solution that reflects the broadest possible consensus among Council members. I would like in particular to thank Kuwait and Sweden, as co-penholders of the resolution, for their tireless efforts.

By speaking with one voice on the humanitarian situation in Syria, the Security Council is helping to alleviate the situation as a whole, helping to consolidate the momentum towards a ceasefire, contributing to counter-terrorism efforts in the country and serving the overarching objective of arriving at a political settlement of the Syrian issue. Going forward, the international community should work together to ensure the full implementation of resolution 2401 (2018), so that it can play a positive role in improving the humanitarian situation in Syria.

The only way to fundamentally improve the humanitarian situation in Syria and to lift the people of Syria out of their suffering is to find a political settlement. The international community should support the Syrian parties in seeking a swift solution that is acceptable to all parties in the context of a United Nations mediation through a Syrian-owned and -led political process in order to end the suffering of the Syrian people as soon as possible. China is keen for the Council to remain united and forge consensus on the Syrian issue. The Council must push the Syrian parties to consolidate the momentum towards a ceasefire, strengthen cooperation on combating terrorist groups, advance the process towards a political settlement and play a constructive role in maintaining peace and security in Syria and across the region.

**Mr. Umarov** (Kazakhstan): The delegation of Kazakhstan voted in favour of resolution 2401 (2018), on the cessation of hostilities in Syria. I express my gratitude to the co-penholders — Sweden and Kuwait — for their determined efforts to find common ground among the Security Council members. I also thank the members of the Council for their constructive approach towards the resolution, which has many significant provisions.

The position of Kazakhstan is very consistent — that stability in the Middle East can be achieved by reducing violence for peaceful means and avoiding the emergence of new tensions. In the past few days, Heads of State and Government from around the world have called on the Syrian Government to observe human rights and on both sides to exercise restraint. Simultaneously, external incitement that fuels tension should stop immediately so that it does not endanger regional security.

We see a Security Council united today in demanding that all parties cease hostilities without delay. We now expect all countries that exercise influence on the ground and conduct military campaigns against international terrorist groups in Syria to interact and find common ground for fighting terrorism jointly, while taking practical steps to implement the resolution. Kazakhstan calls on all forces that support an early settlement of the Syrian conflict, including the Government of Syria and the armed opposition, to fully comply with the ceasefire regime and the resolution.

All the parties must ensure safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to reach the affected areas, as well as the evacuation of people in need of medical assistance. The Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan hopes that his colleagues — the Foreign Ministers of the guarantor States of the Astana process — will take additional constructive steps to strictly implement the

ceasefire agreements and support the de-escalation zones in Syria, at the meeting scheduled to take place in the capital of Kazakhstan in mid-March or earlier, if need be.

These were difficult, but successful, deliberations. We should all work collectively to find a peaceful solution. The unity shown today in the Security Council should continue, since we have yet a lot to accomplish in Syria and elsewhere.

**Mr. Van Oosterom** (Netherlands): On Wednesday, during the high-level debate on the Charter of the United Nations, I quoted one of the founding fathers of the United Nations, Ambassador Stettinius (see S/PV.8185). He said that the members of the Security Council had the obligation to agree so that the Council may be able to act and act effectively. Today we finally managed to agree to end the atrocious violence in eastern Ghouta; to end attacks against hospitals; and to end the killing of innocent civilians, including women and children.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the unanimous adoption of this crucial resolution — resolution 2401 (2018). Let me thank the co-penholders in particular — Kuwait and Sweden — for their tireless efforts and skilled diplomatic work. We pay tribute to them.

Today we have a resolution, now we need to see action on the ground. All United Nations States Members have an obligation to make sure that the words of the resolution are implemented without delay. The Syrian authorities in particular have a specific responsibility towards their own people. The resolution means that all parties must cease hostilities without delay. All parties must engage immediately for a sustainable and durable humanitarian pause of at least 30 consecutive days throughout Syria to enable the safe, unimpeded and sustained delivery of humanitarian aid and services and to enable medical evacuations of the critically sick and wounded, in accordance with applicable international law.

The implementation of the resolution means the cessation of hostilities, the delivery of humanitarian aid and urgent medical evacuations. It is a first step in the right direction, but much more is needed — a political solution, accountability and the return of refugees. The Council should remain seized of the matter and closely monitor the implementation of the resolution, starting today. The Council should reconvene without delay if the situation demands it.

**Ms. Wronecka** (Poland): We highly commend the work of Sweden and Kuwait as co-penholders on the humanitarian resolution for Syria — resolution 2401 (2018) — who did their best to accommodate the concerns of all Security Council members.

On Wednesday I stressed that it is the Council's responsibility to not fail in stopping the ongoing human tragedy in Syria, and in eastern Ghouta in particular (see S/PV.8185). Today we have managed to reach compromise and adopt the resolution by consensus. I would like to thank all my colleagues for their very constructive attitude.

However, the innocent people of Syria have waited far too long for that. Now, all of the parties, especially those with influence on the ground, must make every effort to implement it. In that context, we reiterate our call on all sides to comply with international humanitarian law, cease all hostilities against civilians and allow for free humanitarian access. In conclusion, it is not only our legal obligation to act now, but also our moral duty.

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Following the unanimous adoption of resolution 2401 (2018), I take the floor on behalf of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, whose Government closely followed the whole process leading up to its successful conclusion with the unanimous adoption of this humanitarian resolution.

At the outset, I pay a well-deserved tribute to the penholders, Kuwait and Sweden, for all their efforts, patience and dedication to the goal of drafting a resolution that was ultimately deserving of a favourable vote. We commend the unanimous support of the elected members for the penholders throughout the duration of that process.

In Spanish, it is often said that "it is never too late if the outcome is good". This positive outcome is the result of the contributions of all members of the Council, to which we extend our gratitude and commend for the fruitful end. What lies ahead now is the effective implementation of the provisions of the resolution with a view to achieving the objective the Security Council has set out to achieve, namely, an immediate ceasefire throughout Syria in order to facilitate the safe, unhindered and sustainable delivery

of humanitarian aid, services and medical evacuations of all severely injured and ill persons. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea energetically calls on all parties, the United Nations and those involved in the devastating conflict to do everything possible towards the noble end of saving human lives and alleviating the suffering that has been endured far too long by the people.

The adoption of the resolution partially spares all members of the Security Council from embarrassment. We will save ourselves completely from that shame if the ceasefire takes effect in the next few hours and if humanitarian aid and medical care begin to reach the affected persons over the upcoming days.

**Mr. Inchauste Jordán** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Seven years have elapsed since the beginning of this war, and the suffering of the Syrian people continues to worsen. The numerous human lives lost in recent weeks add to the more than 500,000 lost since the beginning of the conflict. We believe that while military tactics prevail over a political solution, there can be no lasting peace, and consequently it will be civilians, especially women and children, who will continue to be subjected to unnecessary suffering. For that reason, we commend the adoption of resolution 2401 (2018), and hope that its timely and effective implementation will help to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people.

My delegation underscores and commends the arduous work undertaken by the penholders. The delegations of Sweden and Kuwait have demonstrated strong leadership and resolve up to the very last moment to reach an agreement. Similarly, we wish to acknowledge the effort and commitment shown by the Russian Federation and the parties involved, as well as all members of the Security Council during the negotiation process.

In recent days, my delegation has expressed its position on the matter at hand, and today we do so once again. Consensus and unity within the Security Council are pivotal if we are to improve the humanitarian situation in Syria, which is why we commend the consensus reached today. We reiterate that there can be no military solution to the situation and that the only way forward is through inclusive political dialogue. We thefaffirm our support for the Geneva process and the achievements made in Astana, of which the agreements must be upheld by all parties. Moreover, we have high expectations that the various forums of dialogue, such as the Sochi dialogue, can contribute to the achievement of a final and lasting peace.

**Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia): We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2401 (2018) on the humanitarian situation in Syria. We voted in favour because we believe that the resolution can make a positive difference on the ground in the alleviation of the continued tragedy of the Syrians. Having discussed the severe humanitarian crisis in Syria almost weekly, it was clear that what was required from the Council was concrete and collective action that would contribute to alleviating the intolerable suffering of Syrians in all areas of the country. We are pleased that the Council has acted and sent the right message to bring about a cessation of hostilities that will allow the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to have safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to deliver the much-needed humanitarian assistance to all Syrians in need.

I wish to express our sincere appreciation to the delegations of Kuwait and Sweden, which effectively and efficiently led the process of negotiations. We all know that it was not an easy task, but they did excellent work in accommodating the concerns of all delegations with a high sense of responsibility and patience. We also thank all delegations for their flexibility during the negotiation process. We hope that the positive spirit that led the Council to adopt the resolution will prevail, not only in ensuring its effective implementation, but also in laying the bases for greater mutual understanding among all those with enormous influence over developments in Syria, whether in the humanitarian or political and security domains. We know, given the realities, that this is a tall order.

One matter needs to be stressed on this occasion. The security situation in Syria is perhaps more complicated today than it has ever been over the past few years. We should not overlook the fact that the source of the humanitarian tragedy that we see today is the result of the difficult political and security situation in the country. We trust that all those, including those whom Ambassador Delattre referred to, will continue to play a role in contributing to the creation of the basis for progress in the peace process. That is extremely critical for ensuring that the humanitarian tragedy is Syria is brought to an end.

We can only hope that what the Council has achieved today will lay the basis for averting an even greater humanitarian tragedy in Syria.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to thank you, Mr. President, and your team, as well as the Permanent Representative of Sweden and his team, for the tireless efforts made to achieve this important consensus, and we also thank the members of the Council for their flexibility. This commitment will allow for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Syria and the urgent and necessary provision of humanitarian assistance.

We underscore the need to maintain unity within the Council in terms of its responsibilities to protect the civilian population, in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law.

Peru, a sponsor of resolution 2401 (2017), which we have just adopted, will closely monitor its urgent implementation and compliance therewith by all parties involved. We wish to express our sorrow concerning and solidarity with the victims of the conflict in Syria, and our support and admiration for the United Nations humanitarian workers and those of other agencies deployed on the ground. We hope that the important step that we have taken today will help to achieve a lasting solution to the Syrian conflict in line with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex).

**Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire, as a sponsor of resolution 2401 (2017), which we have just adopted and which is purely humanitarian in nature, commends its initiators, namely, your country, Mr. President, and Sweden. It welcomes the adoption of the resolution, which demands the cessation without delay of hostilities. This demand on the part of the Council must be upheld by all actors on every battlefield in Syria.

Côte d'Ivoire also welcomes the efforts undertaken by all parties to arrive at a consensus within the Council. It thanks in particular the Russian Federation for its spirit of compromise. The contribution made by all parties to the adoption of the resolution is aimed at saving the Syrian people from the horrific war plaguing that country, which is imperilling the lives of thousands of human beings, specifically civilians, including women and children.

Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that only a definitive end to the Syrian conflict through negotiations can enable all Syrians to restore peace, achieve reconciliation and rebuild their country, with a view to relaunching its economic and social development. We hope that the 30-day truce demanded by the Council will be the beginning of a process that will bring peace to Syria on the basis of the relevant conclusions and recommendations of all negotiations held in Astana, Sochi and Geneva concerning the country.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Over the past two days, 10 of the thousands of missiles that have fallen on the Syrian capital landed on the headquarters of the Red Crescent in Damascus, the main headquarters of the Syrian Red Crescent, in the Abu Ramani neighbourhood of Damascus. Those missiles were launched by the moderate armed groups in Al-Ghouta. Thousands of people died, including Dr. Hassan, a professor at the Technological Health Institute in Damascus. A French colleague and friend, Thierry Mariani, said:

(*spoke in French*)

> "Like hundreds of others over the past five years, Dr. Hassan Haj Hassan was killed by shells fired from Ghouta on Damascus by these moderate rebels. Those dead and are not entitled to media compassion; they are on the wrong side of history. When will there be balanced coverage?"

(*spoke in Arabic*)

This French citizen accurately described the suffering of the Syrian people as a result of the launching by terrorists of missiles against Damascus. He had visited Aleppo in 2017, and as he was leaving Free Syrian Army gangs fired rockets at the airport. Luckily he was not hurt, but since then the Aleppo airport has been closed because it is unsafe. Also, the head of the Syrian Red Crescent in Idlib, Dr. Muhammad Al-Waty, was kidnapped by moderate armed groups.

My colleague the Permanent Representative of France said that we must observe a truce, and I agree with him. However, I think that we also need to implement the 29 other Security Council resolutions on the situation in Syria, of which 13 relate to the fight against terrorism. We need not only a month-long cessation of hostilities; we also need to see the implementation of the 29 other resolutions that the Council has adopted.

My colleague the British Ambassador told us horrific stories that he heard from other people. Perhaps

he has not heard about what the British forces have done in Iraq, Palestine and Libya.

The British Government went to the Malvinas and fought Argentina for an island that it does not own and that is situated tens of thousands of kilometres away from the United Kingdom. However, I say to my British colleague that his Government — and I am not using the term "regime", because I respect international law — is preventing us from countering terrorism in our own territories. We are not going thousands of kilometres away, we have not been fighting in other countries. It is in our own territories that we are combating terrorism — terrorism that is supported by the Government of the United Kingdom.

During the meeting on Thursday (see S/PV.8186), I explained the reality of what is happening in Syria — the suffering of civilians as a result of the actions of armed terrorist groups. I assure members once again that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has taken all the de-escalation initiatives seriously and has observed them so as to protect the lives of its citizens and to stop those who have been trading in their pain and blood. In that regard, I note that the Syrian Government has complied with the Astana agreement on establishing de-escalation zones and stipulated a number of commitments, including compelling the signatory armed groups to sever any ties they have with terrorist organizations, especially the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Al-Nusra Front and all other affiliated groups. At the same time, the Astana agreement gave the Syrian Government the right to respond in case of any violations by those armed groups.

It was not at all surprising to us that those terrorist armed groups would not comply with any of those initiatives, but would use them as an opportunity to reorganize their forces and their terrorist fighters, acquire more arms, military equipment, human and logistical support and perpetuate their crimes against the Syrian people. They are receiving instructions from certain States members of the Council, as well as regional actors that are practicing State terrorism to ensure the obstruction and failure of those initiatives and agreements.

Since the signing of the agreement on the establishment of de-escalation zones, these armed groups have systematically violated it. In responding to the violations, the Syrian Government has exercised extreme self-restraint to protect the lives of civilians and salvage the agreement that terrorist armed groups and the countries that sponsor them have been trying to obstruct since the moment of signing it. However, these violations have become repeated and serious and have affected the lives of 8 million civilians living in the capital, Damascus, and its suburbs. Attacks have been waged by launching rockets and missiles and using car bombs, with Syrian military sites being targeted. All this has led to an unbearable situation that we cannot condone. As a State, we bear a responsibility towards our citizens and we have a sovereign right to counter terrorism. We are also receiving repeated appeals from Syrian citizens for protection — their families, their children, their schools — from the acts of these terrorist armed groups

In the light of these violations and terrorist acts, the Syrian Government has had to take the necessary steps to protect its citizens. We exercised our legitimate right to defend them. At the same time, we have taken all the steps necessary to ensure the safety of the civilians who have been taken hostage by these groups and used as human shields inside eastern Ghouta. In cooperation with our Russian friends, we also ensured the safe passage of civilians out of danger from 4 to 14 February. We have provided shelter and food and necessary medical care. The Government has paid for all that assistance. We have called upon armed groups to lay down their weapons and stop their terrorism from residential places and neighbourhoods, and instead engage in national reconciliation initiatives.

Of course, the appeals of 8 million Syrians do not reach the Secretariat or the representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom and France, although they receive appeals from their proxies — terrorist armed groups and White Helmet terrorists, the new legitimate representative of the Al-Nusra Front. It seems that these countries decided today to replace the black flags of ISIL and Al-Qaida with white flags in Iraq and the White Helmets in Syria. We are therefore done with using the black colour; we are using the white colour now, white flags in Iraq and White Helmets in Syria.

According to General Assembly resolution 46/182, which we all negotiated and reached consensus on, the basic principle that governs the delivery of humanitarian aid is respect for the sovereignty of the country concerned as well as coordinating with it fully in any activity in which the United Nations is engaged on the territory of the country in question. However, such principles lose all value when they are

subject to the political whims and double standards of the Secretariat and some more influential countries, particularly when it comes to implementing them in Syria. How else can we explain that some countries submit draft resolutions on the situation in Syria and negotiate them for many weeks with all actors, but excluding the country concerned? This is what I asked the day before yesterday. How do we explain that the Resident Coordinator in Damascus sends a note to the Syrian Foreign Ministry on 14 February stressing that the aid convoys reached 2.3 million Syrians in the so-called besieged and hard-to-reach areas in 2017, while the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs presented completely false figures yesterday to tarnish the image of the Syrian Government and to give Western countries in the Security Council justification for targeting the Syrian Government and its partners? The Resident Coordinator said that aid had reached 2.3 million Syrians. But just two days ago, Mr. Lowcock said that aid had reached only 20,000 people.

Along with some members of the Council, we have said repeatedly over the past seven years that to end the suffering of civilians in Syria we do not need non-consensual draft resolutions, nor do we need to adopt new resolutions or hold regular or emergency meetings. We do not need to deplete United Nations resources to prepare periodic reports that rely on unreliable sources. We do not need to establish a committee here and a body there. We need to implement the 29 — now 30 — Security Council resolutions that have been adopted; it is quite a coincidence that by adopting resolution 2401 (2018) today we have reached 30 resolutions. These resolutions should be implemented.

The Governments of some countries should stop spending billions of dollars to support and finance armed terrorist groups and provide them with arms. The latest we have heard is that the United States of America has allocated $4 billion to ublically fund the terrorists in Syria. Those countries must stop opening their borders and airports to facilitate the flow of terrorist fighters to Syria. They must allow the Syrian people to shape its future and restore its security and stability without any foreign interference.

You said, Mr. President, that the Council rejects anything that violates the purposes and principles of the Charter. Yes, this is very precise. You called also for the implementation of today's resolution in all parts of Syria, which is how we interpret this resolution in Damascus. Resolution 2401 (2018) must be implemented in all parts of Syria, including Afrin, United States-occupied areas and the Golan.

In addition, let me make it clear that the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France and their enablers in the region should stop holding meetings in Washington, D.C., Paris and London, establishing groups, bodies or forums and devising what they refer to as strategic plans reminiscent of colonial times. Following a meeting in Washington, D.C., they announced that they had drafted a plan to divide Syria within a year — I am just recounting what they said. The strategic plans contained in the document adopted in Washington, D.C., are aimed at dividing Syria, changing its political system by force, spreading terrorism and maintaining an illegitimate military presence in our territories. I say to my colleague the Permanent Representative of the United States, who threatened us here at the Council a while ago and no one has responded to her, that none of the plans will succeed; they will backfire sooner or later.

According to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, my country has the right to defend itself with all of the legal tools available. A United States occupying military presence exists in our territories, and we have the right to resist it. The representative of the United States has threatened us. We, in turn, give her a warning from this Chamber because, according to Article 51 of the Charter, we have the right to defend ourselves.

We again stress that double standards will continue to mar international efforts to counter terrorism as long as there is a partial approach to addressing the threat of armed groups in Syria. Some members of the Council claim that they are concerned about an area controlled by terrorist armed groups in eastern Ghouta. The size of that area is 50 square kilometres. They continue to ignore three illegally occupied Syrian territories covering 50,000 square kilometres. They focus on 50 square kilometres and ignore an area of 50,000 square kilometres, of American, Turkish and Israeli occupation. That simple comparison reflects the political hypocrisy of some Member States, and the inaction of the Security Council and of other bodies of the United Nations, as the Organization succumbs to the political and financial polarization that has become the main feature of its working methods.

In conclusion, we will continue, with the support our allies, to counter terrorism regardless of where it exists in Syria — I repeat, regardless of where it exists in Syria. We are exercising our sovereign right of self-defence and a constitutional right in our territory and within our national borders. We do not send forces to conquer areas thousands of kilometres away, as the so-called illegitimate international coalition does in my country, Syria, today. We do not follow the example of French forces in Mali, the Niger and other African countries, or of the United States and United Kingdom in Afghanistan, Libya today and Iraq previously. We defend ourselves and counter terrorism within our borders. We did not go to Mali, the Niger or the Malvinas.

We need serious commitment from Governments that issue instructions to armed terrorist groups. The groups should be given orders to immediately stop targeting civilians and perpetrating terrorist acts — I repeat immediately and without delay, as the resolution stipulates. I stress that the Syrian Government will reserve the right to respond as it deems appropriate if such groups target civilians in any part of Syria with even a single missile.

I take it that we all understand that paragraph 1 of resolution 2401 (2018) also applies to the aggression of Turkish forces in Afrin and the repeated acts of aggression by the international coalition against my country's sovereignty and territories. Of course, resolution 2401 (2018) applies also to the continuous violations by Israeli occupation forces against Syria's sovereignty, by supporting terrorist factions in the occupied Syrian Golan. That is how we interpret the resolution just adopted by the Council.

*The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.8189

# Security Council

Seventy-third year

*Provisional*

**8189**th meeting
Monday, 26 February 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

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| *President:* | Mr. Alotaibi | (Kuwait) |
| *Members:* | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mr. Inchauste Jordán |
| | China | Mr. Zhang Dianbin |
| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue |
| | Equatorial Guinea | Mr. Ndong Mba |
| | Ethiopia | Mr. Alemu |
| | France | Mr. Delattre |
| | Kazakhstan | Mr. Umarov |
| | Netherlands | Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren |
| | Peru | Mr. Meza-Cuadra |
| | Poland | Ms. Wronecka |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Polyanskiy |
| | Sweden | Mr. Orrenius Skau |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Clay |
| | United States of America | Ms. Eckels-Currie |

## Agenda

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi (S/2018/89)

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18-05187 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Burundi**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi (S/2018/89)**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, and His Excellency Mr. Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/89, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kafando.

**Mr. Kafando** (*spoke in French*): I welcome the opportunity to brief the Council on the occasion of the consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on Burundi (S/2018/89). Before I begin, allow me, Mr President, to congratulate you on your accession to presidency of the Council for this month and to greet all members of the Council.

We had hoped to have among us President Benjamin Mkapa, facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, whose contribution would undoubtedly have not only deepened the understanding of the political stakes in Burundi, but also identified prospects for the continuation of the process. Unfortunately, he was not able to make the trip due to his participation in the summit of the Heads of State of the East African Community.

As announced, my briefing concerns the Secretary-General's report on the situation at Burundi, of 25 January 2018. The first observation of the report focuses on the political situation in Burundi, which remains tense and characterized by measures that restrict freedom. Indeed, I note that only the majority party and some other political formations allied to it are able to carry out political activities without hindrance. The economic situation is far from improving owing to the ongoing political situation. Such an environment cannot be conducive to the organization of credible elections.

The security situation is improving significantly across the country, although human rights violations and other abuses continue to be reported, especially since the launch on 12 December 2017 of the campaign to raise awareness of the constitutional referendum.

As far as the humanitarian situation is concerned, the report emphasizes that it remains a matter of concern. The irrevocable decision of the Burundian Government to go ahead with the constitutional amendment will be decided by the referendum that, in principle, is planned for May. To that end, it should be noted that the concern raised by the Secretary-General in his report cannot be interpreted as interference in Burundi's internal affairs by denying the country its sovereign right to amend its own Constitution. On the contrary, it must be understood as his desire to seek consensus around an issue of such importance to the future or even the fate of Burundi.

History make it clear that the stability and development of Burundi over the past 15 years are essentially the result of the broad consensus that prevailed in the negotiation and adoption of the Arusha Agreement. Moreover, this recommendation on the part of the Secretary-General merely explains article 299 of the 2005 Burundian Constitution, which is still in force and which states that "[n]o revision procedure may be used if it undermines national unity [or] the cohesion of the Burundian people".

The United Nations, the African Union, the East African Community and the European Union are the guarantors of the Arusha Agreement, the quintessence of which is not limited to ethnic and gender balance, which is retained in the new Constitution. Power-sharing, good political governance, pluralist democracy based on the principle of broad consensus, and the protection of minority rights remain at the heart of the Arusha Agreement which, as we know, was the basis of the Burundian Constitution of 2005, which is currently under revision.

All this could have been possible if political will had prevailed in the inter-Burundian dialogue, under the auspices of the East African region. That having been said, I take this opportunity to congratulate the mediator and facilitator of the Burundian dialogue on his efforts to find a just solution to the crisis. Now that, following its most recent summit, the region has decided to pursue the dialogue, it is up to the African Union, alongside the other partners, including the United Nations, to remain strongly committed to the outcome of mediation. For the United Nations, whose support for the process is intended above all to help bring the Burundians together in the hope of reaching a dynamic compromise, dialogue remains indispensable.

I have just summarized very briefly the report of the Secretary-General on Burundi, submitted for the Council's consideration. Everything indicates that the country remains a subject of concern to the international community. I note that in its communiqué on the report, dated 14 February, the Government of Burundi declares itself ready to spare no effort to cooperate with the United Nations in the context of respect of its sovereignty. In that regard, as Special Envoy I can attest to the fact that this good cooperation already exists between the Burundian authorities and the United Nations mission in Burundi. I thank them for their welcome and their full availability, although I would add that, contrary to certain statements, the Special Envoy's contribution to the Secretary-General's report has hardly exceeded his obligations, let alone guided by any partiality. The sole objective guiding his actions was to sound the alarm bell so that the emerging future of the Burundian people can be enjoyed by all Burundians and thereby to avoid the endless reversals of which that country has suffered so much.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Kafando for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lauber.

**Mr. Lauber**: On behalf of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), I would like to thank you, Sir, for inviting me to brief the Security Council today and for the excellent cooperation between the Council and the configuration. As per established practice, the following statement has been approved by the members of the configuration, including the country concerned, Burundi.

Since my previous briefing to the Council (see S/PV.8109), the Burundi configuration of the PBC convened on two occasions, on 8 November 2017 and 29 January 2018, with a focus on humanitarian, socioeconomic and political questions. The configuration heard briefings from Mr. Garry Conille, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Burundi, and from representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Peacebuilding Support Office.

At the briefing on 29 January, Ms. Ursula Müller, Assistant Secretary-General of OCHA, reported that in the past three years, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Burundi had tripled, increasing from 1 million people to 3.6 million people. She noted that 25 per cent of the population was estimated to be food insecure. That is an increase of 7 per cent as compared to 2016. In 2017, 500,000 people received food and nutrition assistance. Currently, at least 60,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition. On a more positive note, a malaria epidemic, which resulted in approximately 9,400 deaths between 2015 and 2017, has successfully been contained.

On 19 February, OCHA presented its report on the humanitarian response plan for 2018 in Bujumbura. On 21 February, the Government reported in a press release that it rejected the content of the report as a whole owing to a lack of cooperation, calling OCHA's numbers exaggerated and referring to positive developments regarding food security. The Government invited OCHA to discuss cooperation on humanitarian responses with the responsible ministries in order to produce a consensual plan for both parties.

At the configuration meeting of 29 January, Ms. Ninette Kelley, Director of the New York Office of UNHCR, informed the configuration of the challenges related to the return of refugees from Tanzania to Burundi. On the basis of an agreement reached by Burundi, Tanzania and UNHCR at the Tripartite Commission meeting last August, 13,000 refugees returned in 2017. The repatriation of another 60,000 persons is planned for 2018. The return of refugees will increase pressure on the receiving communities, requiring additional reintegration support to those who return, as well as to those who did not leave the area. UNHCR also reports an influx of more than 8,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo into Burundi since the beginning of 2018.

The displaced persons inside Burundi are being supported under the humanitarian response plan. Besides that, a regional refugee response plan is in place to support the 434,000 Burundian refugees living in Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. On 29 January, the Permanent Representative of Tanzania informed the configuration that Tanzania had decided to withdraw from the comprehensive refugee response framework.

In various interactions with the configuration, Resident Coordinator Conille pointed to the challenging socioeconomic situation. A negative trade balance, inflation, which rose from 5.6 per cent in December 2016 to 18 per cent in December 2017, unemployment and a shortage of foreign currency reserves are among the most worrisome economic trends. The Resident Coordinator outlined multidimensional challenges for the United Nations. The United Nations country team is trying to address the chronic vulnerability and a series of shocks simultaneously. At the moment, strengthening the resilience of the population is a priority of the country team engagement in Burundi.

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the negotiations on a revised memorandum of understanding between OHCHR and the Government of Burundi have yet to be finalized, and the cooperation that was suspended on 11 October 2016 has not yet resumed. I encourage both parties to move forward and to finalize the memorandum of understanding. Meanwhile, the preparations for the deployment of three human rights experts to Bujumbura, in line with Human Rights Council resolution 36/2, of 28 September 2017, are being finalized.

As mentioned in earlier briefings to the Council, it is obvious that the activities of the configuration must be complementary to the efforts to advance the political reconciliation in Burundi undertaken at the subregional, regional and international levels. To that end, I have maintained regular contacts with Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, East African Community (EAC) Facilitator for Burundi; Mr. Smaïl Chergui, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security; Mr. Basile Ikouebe, AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region; and, of course, Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, all of whom I had an opportunity to meet recently in Addis Ababa or Geneva.

In both recent meetings of the PBC Burundi configuration, Member States expressed overwhelming support for the EAC-led dialogue process and gratitude to President Mkapa for his personal engagement. While the Government recognizes that progress was made during the fourth session of the dialogue, some delegations regretted the lack of progress in the process. Some members of the configuration expressed concern that the upcoming referendum on a revised Constitution could reverse some of the gains achieved through the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi. Other delegations expressed the view that constitutional amendments came under the sovereignty of the country and that the situation was generally improving.

In the field of security, since my most recent visit to Burundi and the region, I have received reports that the security situation in the country has been generally calm. I encourage all national stakeholders to contribute to peace and stability in Burundi.

I am currently preparing my next trip to Burundi, which is planned to take place from 27 to 30 March. In view of the recent developments and after consultations with the configuration, I intend to focus on the following five topics during my visit.

First is the mediation efforts of the EAC. In my contacts in Burundi, I will insist that the remaining political divergences be addressed in the framework of the EAC-led dialogue and in an inclusive manner.

Secondly, related to that, I plan to discuss the path leading towards the 2020 elections. I will encourage my interlocutors to reflect on how free, fair and democratic elections in a pluralistic and peaceful environment can be ensured in Burundi and how the international community can support Burundi on that path.

Thirdly, I also plan to continue the socioeconomic dialogue with the Government and its international partners. That dialogue should seek both to address the needs of the population and to overcome existing obstacles to cooperation. I plan to involve additional partners, such as regional actors, the private sector, civil society and academia, in that conversation.

Fourthly, I will continue to focus on the humanitarian situation and to engage with the humanitarian actors on the ground in cooperation with the Government.

Fifthly, national reconciliation and dealing with the past will remain high on my agenda. That is a subject to

which the President of the Republic of Burundi attaches great importance.

The priorities are very similar to those defined by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) for its current engagement. Since my briefing in November, the Peacebuilding Fund has approved three new projects in Burundi, worth a total of $6.5 million. The sum of $3 million was approved for a project involving the four communities in Burundi with the highest number of expected returnees. The project seeks to increase the protection of displaced persons in border areas, specifically with regard to social and economic rights, including access to basic services and livelihoods for returnees and members of host communities, as well as gender-based violence. The second new PBF initiative, at about $1.75 million, supports capacity-building among the youth wings of political parties. The third project, in the same amount, supports intergenerational networks of women leaders in their ability to launch local peacebuilding initiatives.

Based on my recent contacts with Burundian stakeholders and regional and international actors, I wish to draw the following conclusions. The EAC-led dialogue process remains an indispensable instrument to address the current situation in Burundi. National, regional and international interlocutors should continue to lend their support to the efforts undertaken by President Museveni and President Mkapa.

Secondly, the upcoming 2020 elections require increased international attention. It would be a great achievement if national, regional and international actors could agree on some kind of road map so as to create the necessary conditions for democratic, peaceful and inclusive elections in 2020.

Thirdly, humanitarian needs must be addressed. I call on Burundi's international partners to strengthen the resilience of the population by addressing the current humanitarian challenges on the ground in cooperation with the Government. At the same time, I call on the Government of Burundi to continue to cooperate closely and constructively with its international humanitarian partners to address the most urgent needs of Burundi's population.

Fourthly, mid- and long-term socioeconomic development must not be ignored. I invite the Government of Burundi and its partners to engage in dialogue on mutually beneficial, people-centred and innovative forms of engagement.

Fifthly, I remain convinced that a swift signing of the memorandums of understanding between the Government and OHCHR, as well as between the Government and the African Union, and the deployment of the respective human rights observers will provide a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the human rights situation and help safeguard the space for civil society in Burundi.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Lauber for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, on behalf of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, let me express my gratitude to the President of the Security Council for organizing this meeting on Burundi and for the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/89) on the situation in the country, presented by His Excellency Mr. Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, to whom Equatorial Guinea conveys its sincere thanks for the outstanding work that he is doing there. Likewise, Equatorial Guinea expresses its confidence in the mediator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of Uganda, and in its facilitator, His Excellency Mr. William Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the Republic of Tanzania, for the work being carried out to find common ground for an agreement among the members of the political class in Burundi. Accordingly, the joint communiqué issued by the latest Summit of Heads of State of the East African Community expressed appreciation for, and acknowledged the work being carried out by, both statesmen within the framework of seeing through the inter-Burundian dialogue. The briefing by Mr. Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, in his capacity as the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, also afforded us a clear picture of the situation in Burundi, for which we are extremely grateful.

As always, Equatorial Guinea understands that a situation such as the one in Burundi, which is an internal matter, must be resolved internally through a genuine and inclusive political negotiation process among Burundians. In that regard, Equatorial Guinea commends the positive initiatives adopted by the Government of Burundi and its President, His

Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, so as to maintain national stability and promote internal reconciliation, and urges all parties in Burundi to participate actively in the political dialogue and resolve their differences peacefully through dialogue and negotiations. The mediation efforts of regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the East African Community, and the constructive role that the United Nations can play must make up the bulwark of mechanisms for finding a lasting political solution to the situation.

Equatorial Guinea believes that political dialogue is the only way out of the situation in Burundi, and, for that reason, it very positively views the initiatives of the East African Community-led inter-Burundian dialogue held in Arusha, the outcome of which will undoubtedly help normalize the situation. The return to normalcy implies that the dialogue — as the Government has suggested — can already take place within Burundian territory — the home of all children of Burundi — since the security situation has significantly improved, as the report of the Secretary-General notes.

The gradual voluntary return of refugees to their homes is another sign of the normalization of the situation, and the challenge must now lie in their relocation and return to normalcy. We believe that the United Nations, together with local entities, should help in that process, which must comply with the principles enshrined in the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951. We wish to acknowledge the generosity of neighbouring countries that have welcomed refugees.

As a sovereign country, Burundi enjoys the right to adopt any legislative initiative that it deems appropriate for itself. In that regard, we believe that the constitutional referendum scheduled to be held next May falls within powers of the country as a sovereign State. Many other countries have gone through similar processes. They have been considered internal affairs, and in Burundi the case should not be different. The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Burundi must be fully respected. Any negotiation process must lead to the holding of fair elections in 2020. It is therefore essential that all parties commit to the East African Community-led process and unwaveringly show their good will for the benefit of the Burundian people. Only in that way will we witness the full and complete recovery of the people of Burundi so that they can enjoy their innumerable economic possibilities and get on board the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union to participate fully in the sustainable development of that beautiful African country and brotherly nation of Central Africa.

**Mr. Umarov** (Kazakhstan): We thank Mr. Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, and Ambassador Lauber, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their insightful briefings. We express our deep appreciation for the tireless work of the Special Envoy in leading a series of important meetings with Government officials, high-level representatives of international and regional organizations and other stakeholders to seek ways to advance the negotiation process in close cooperation with the facilitator.

Despite progress made in inter-Burundian dialogue, we remain concerned that direct and constructive talks between the Government and the opposition have yet to be established. In that regard, we urge all sides to engage in dialogue to end the crisis according to the spirit and letter of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi. We also call on the leadership of the subregion and guarantors of the Arusha Agreement to redouble their efforts with regard to the revitalization of the East African Community-led mediation. We commend the East African Community mediator, President Museveni, and the facilitator, former President Mkapa, for their steadfast commitment to uniting the region and finding a peaceful solution to the crisis. Although constitutional amendments are the sovereign right of Burundi, we strongly believe that that national process should be held in an environment of confidence and broad consensus and include all key political stakeholders to ensure lasting peace.

The worsening social and economic situation in Burundi warrants the immediate attention of the international community and development partners to provide food security, health care, education and energy. There have been noteworthy results in containing the spread of malaria, with the support of UNICEF, and in training community health workers. That positive dynamic should continue.

The low level of humanitarian aid is still very worrying. With more than 3 million people in need of assistance across the country, it will be important to ensure that the international community supports the humanitarian response plan for Burundi for 2018. The United Nations Refugee Agency appeal for funding to

support Burundian refugees in 2018 continues to be the lowest-funded refugee response plan in the world. We commend Burundi's neighbours for hosting large numbers of its refugees, and would like to remind States that their repatriation must be voluntary and conducted in accordance with the principles of respect and dignity outlined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

Sustainable security and stability in Burundi should be the main considerations, and international support to that process is vital. We commend the active engagement of the team from the Office of the Special Envoy in assisting the facilitator of the fourth dialogue session, encouraging the participants to engage in an inclusive dialogue. The expedited finalization of the status-of-mission agreement will promote the commitment of the United Nations and enhance cooperation with Burundi.

In conclusion, we reiterate the importance of a regional approach in addressing the underlying causes of Burundi's issues, linking security and development, and we also call for a more coordinated conduct of operations on the ground by the United Nations in this part of Africa. Full implementation of the Arusha Agreement is vital to preventing a further escalation of violence and maintaining peace and security in Burundi.

**Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for the quality of his briefing on the situation in Burundi, and we commend his very hard work in that country. We would also like to thank Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his briefing on the evolving sociopolitical situation in Burundi.

Côte d'Ivoire has taken note of the efforts that the Burundian authorities and the international community have made to stabilize the country in the past few years. However, we are still concerned about the state of progress in the political process, human rights issues and the humanitarian situation. With regard to the political process, we are concerned about the impasse in the political dialogue, despite the international community's mediation efforts. We regret the fact that the Inter-Burundian Dialogue conducted under the auspices of the East African Community, whose fourth session was held in Uganda between 27 November and 8 December 2017, has made no significant progress at a time when important deadlines such as the draft review of the Constitution, scheduled for May of this year, and the 2020 presidential election, are approaching.

However, we hope that the changes envisaged in the area of constitutional reform will not undermine the achievements of the historic Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, which has enabled the country to enjoy 10 years of peace and stability and which, regardless of differences of interpretation, remains central to reconciliation between Burundi's political stakeholders. In that regard, we urge the parties in Burundi to begin an inclusive political dialogue and encourage the Government to work to establish a peaceful sociopolitical atmosphere that will enable all stakeholders to participate in the country's peace and reconciliation process, on the basis of the Arusha Agreement.

Côte d'Ivoire is concerned about the persistent allegations of human rights violations in Burundi. We urge the Burundian authorities to make every effort to investigate them and, if they are confirmed, to take all steps necessary to put an end to them and to identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice. We are also concerned about the massive displacement of people that has been adding to the number of Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries. We encourage the Government of Burundi and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to resume negotiations with a view to signing a memorandum of understanding on the legal framework for their cooperation and its practical aspects. We urge the Burundian authorities to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Human Rights Council-mandated Commission of Inquiry on Burundi in order to shed light on the allegations of extrajudicial executions, arrests and arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture and inhuman, cruel and degrading treatment.

We remain concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Burundi. The fact is that despite the possibility of voluntary returns, the number of Burundian refugees living in neighbouring countries is still significant, and the country's socioeconomic situation does not seem conducive to their rapid return and sustainable reintegration into Burundi's social fabric. This is an opportunity, however, to welcome the signing on 30 August 2017 of the tripartite agreement between the Government of Burundi, the Government of Tanzania and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which has enabled nearly 13,000 Burundian refugees to return. In that

regard, we encourage the Burundian authorities to create conditions conducive to these refugees' return and urge the United Nations and the country's bilateral and humanitarian partners to provide support and assistance. My delegation welcomes the launch by the United Nations of a 2018 emergency plan for Burundi, aimed at providing protection and lifesaving assistance to those in need throughout the country.

In conclusion, we appeal to the international community in general, and the United Nations in particular, to further support the efforts of the East African Community and the mediator and facilitator of the Inter-Burundian Dialogue to restore stability and national reconciliation in Burundi. Lastly, we urge the Council to maintain its unity on the subject and give sustained attention to the situation in Burundi.

**Mr. Inchauste Jordán** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia would like to thank Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and the Permanent Representative of Switzerland, Ambassador Jürg Lauber, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings.

Bolivia values and supports the Special Envoy's efforts to continue the Inter-Burundian Dialogue in an inclusive environment. In that regard, we see positive developments in his work during his visits to Burundi and Tanzania with national stakeholders, including the Government authorities in Bujumbura, and his consultations with the facilitator of the Dialogue appointed by the East African Community. We encourage all the parties to support the facilitation efforts led by Tanzania's former President, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, in accordance with the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, which should continue to be the cornerstone of this process. We also call on the parties to implement the road map proposed by Mr. Mkapa in order to reach consensus and create appropriate conditions for a peaceful environment during the upcoming elections, which will take place in 2020. In that regard, we appreciate the efforts made during the fourth dialogue meeting, held in Arusha from 27 November to 8 December last year, which resulted in a summary of 19 points of convergence.

We highlight that progress and we call on the parties to continue with the inclusive dialogue and work on the points of divergence in order to reach a negotiated political agreement and to promote national reconciliation. Similarly, we praise the work the Office of the Special Envoy carried out during the meeting in providing technical assistance to the facilitator.

We acknowledge the work of the EAC, the Special Envoy of the African Union, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations country team. We encourage them to continue their work and to coordinate their efforts in order to achieve better cooperation and continue to support the EAC-led mediation.

We also welcome the joint statement of the nineteenth summit of the Heads of State of the Community of East African States, issued on 23 February, which expressed gratitude for the work of the facilitator and the mediator of the inter-Burundian dialogue. We also commend the EAC for its commitment through this statement to finance, within its possibilities, the dialogue process. We agree that the EAC should continue to lead this process.

We note the efforts of the Government of Burundi to restore peace following the 2015 crisis and we highlight the fact that the security situation remains stable. We encourage it to continue to build a peaceful environment that contributes to the development of Burund and we commend its decision to host the twentieth summit of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African in April, which also testifies to the calm currently being enjoyed in the country.

We welcome the voluntary return of refugees. We call on host countries to continue facilitating their return in cooperation with the Government and the High Commissioner for Refugees and to continue supporting the return programme, since it is hoped that 60,000 refugees will return over the course of this year. We believe that conditions ensuring a voluntary, informed, dignified, safe and permanent return to their places of origin must be guaranteed. To that end, we call on host countries to relocate refugees far from the borders in cases in which they do not want to return, in accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

We encourage the international community to continue financing the humanitarian response programme in Burundi and we call on the countries that imposed sanctions to consider lifting them, since unilateral sanctions run counter to the Charter of the United Nations, constitute a violation of international

law and have been shown to have negative consequences on the lives of vulnerable groups, such as women and children, as well as a negative impact on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In conclusion, we believe that the full and committed involvement of the international community and of all the parties is of utmost importance. In this vein, it is essential to continue strengthening the bases to cooperate on the permanent stabilization of Burundi in the framework of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and with strict respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Burundi with a process led by and for Burundians.

**Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia): We wish to express our thanks to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, former President Kafando, for his briefing on the current political situation in Burundi. We also thank Ambassador Lauber, Chairman of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for his briefing. We applaud the excellent work he has been doing and we endorse the agenda he has set as he moves forward with a view to discharging his responsibilities.

We take note of the improvements in the overall security situation in Burundi, which, as the Special Envoy says, have been remarkable. However, we recognize the need to sustain the existing level of stability and transform it into durable peace. That is indeed important and a consensus needs to be created among the Burundians around this noble objective.

The need for broad consensus, as the Special Envoy says, is very critical. This can be peacefully resolved only through an inclusive dialogue on the basis of the Arusha Agreement and the Constitution of Burundi. It is imperative to ensure that the ongoing efforts at constitutional reform are conducted through a broad consensus of all stakeholders so as to preserve the country's security and stability. We are convinced that the Special Envoy has the necessary goodwill and commitment to helping Burundi achieve this. We have full confidence in him.

We reiterate our support to the eastern African-led inter-Burundian dialogue and the efforts of the facilitator, former President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, under the leadership of the mediator of the Community of East African States (EAC), President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda.

As witnessed in the inter-Burundian talks held in Arusha on 27 November to 8 December 2017, the peace process remains deadlocked in spite of the efforts by the facilitator. No doubt it would have been good to hear directly from him on the challenges encountered and the way forward, but we understand he could not make it. In any case, the need to reinvigorate the peace process is clear and we take note of the decision by the East African Community summit, which was held this past weekend in Uganda, calling upon all the Burundian parties to expeditiously conclude the dialogue under the facilitator and mediator. The annual summit also expressed its readiness to deploy the high-level committee of Heads of State on Burundi.

The support of the Council to the EAC-led peace process remains very important to create the necessary conditions for peaceful and democratic elections in 2020. We believe that, as the Special Envoy has stressed, that coordination and coherence between the East African Community, the African Union and the United Nations are also key to making progress in the peace process.

We appreciate the important discussions held by the Secretary-General and his Envoy with regional and subregional partners in this spirit. We note that Burundi is facing enormous socioeconomic challenges, and that, coupled with reduced international financial assistance, has made the situation more difficult. While the voluntary return of Burundian refugees from Tanzania is welcome, its impact in further compounding the socioeconomic challenges of the country cannot be overlooked. That is why Burundi needs international support to provide assistance to the returning Burundian refugees and to implement its socioeconomic development programmes. In this context, we commend the Chairman of the Burundi configuration of the PBC for his various engagements focused on the socioeconomic cooperation between the international partners in the Government of Burundi. We believe that these efforts have to be seen as an integral part of the search for peace in Burundi to support its strong institutions in creating a conducive climate in which political differences can be addressed without backsliding into the violence of the past.

It should be stressed that though it might seem counterintuitive, Burundi indeed has strong institutions, which we in the Horn of Africa are very much aware of. How could Burundi otherwise be able to contribute to the fight against Al-Shabaab in Somalia? We deeply

appreciate what Burundi is doing in that regard, but we look forward to those institutions being strengthened and made operational by promoting further inclusivity, which is so critical.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to thank the Special Envoy of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Mr. Michel Kafando, for his important work. We also thank the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, Ambassador Jürg Lauber, in his capacity as Chairman of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

We share the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the situation in Burundi (S/2018/89), in particular on the need to reactivate the inter-Burundian dialogue under the auspices of the East African Community and other regional organizations. Similarly, in the light of reports of the deterioration of the human rights situation, we encourage the Government to strive for real progress in its relations with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Finally, we share the opinion that the proposed revision of the Constitution is a matter that falls within Burundi's domestic sovereignty, but at the same time we believe that the initiative should be conducted through an inclusive process that ensures the broad participation of the population. Furthermore, taking into the content and spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, which put an end to a tragic period of violence that must never recur, we support the work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, other United Nations agencies and friendly countries in the framework of preventive diplomacy, in full respect for Burundi's sovereignty.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

**Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, Sir, I wish first of all to offer you my warm congratulations on your deserved assuption of the presidency of the Council for the month of February, which you have exercised with brio. We bore witness this past weekend to your efforts with respect to a State Member of the United Nations.

Let me also thank the Security Council as a whole for its constructive contribution to the Burundi peace process, and especially for its commitment to the national sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of my country, Burundi.

I welcome the presence among us of Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi. I take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi (S/2018/89), which Mr. Kafando introduced, although my delegation does not agree with all its contents, to which I will revert later in my statement.

My thanks also go to my colleague Mr. Jürg Lauber, President of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his contribution to the peacebuilding process in Burundi. We again pledge him our long-standing cooperation.

The purpose of my statement is to share with the Council the new developments in Burundi since its previous meeting on this item in November last year (see S/PV.8109).

At the political level, Burundi is already preparing for the constitutional referendum of 2018 and the general elections of 2020. The priority of the Government in all this is to bring these two major electoral events to fruition by creating a priori an environment conducive to the organization of democratic, free, transparent and, above all, peaceful elections. The registration operation for both elections was conducted in excellent conditions from 8 to 17 February throughout the country and in the diaspora. Provisional figures show that, in total, more than 5 million Burundians registered on the electoral roll, with a slightly larger number of women than men, which we welcome. This morning, the Independent National Electoral Commission organized a guided tour open to all — political parties, civil society, partners and Government — through the data-processing centre for the establishment of the electoral roll. All of this highlights the transparency of the process.

The inter-Burundi dialogue, led with the facilitation of the East African Community, is proceeding normally. At the fourth session held in Arusha, Tanzania, from 27 November to 8 December 2017, participants were able to make progress because there were more points of convergence than of divergence. That is what we call progress. Contrary to what is said in paragraphs 9 and 14 of the Secretary-General's report, as well as in the section on observations and comments, the dialogue is not at a standstill.

While the Secretary-General's report speaks of a dialogue process that has died, the final communiqué of the Summit of Heads of State of the East African Community, held in Kampala on Friday, 23 February, expressed appreciation for the excellent work already done by the mediation and facilitation of the inter-Burundian dialogue, led respectively by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda and former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Benjamin William Mkapa. This deep gap between the appreciation of the region, which is close to Burundi geographically, politically and culturally, and the pessimistic position expressed in the report and by certain actors outside the framework of the inter-Burundian dialogue, constitutes an anomaly that should draw the Council's attention.

The nineteenth Summit of Heads of State of the East African Community also reaffirmed the continued regional ownership of the inter-Burundi dialogue process by the East African Community and reiterated the commitment to financing and rapidly concluding the process under the exclusive leadership of the region.

As regards the revision of the Constitution, it should be recalled that the ongoing constitutional reform is the result of extensive consultations conducted over more than a year with the Burundian population in all its diversity. It is an exercise that is undertaken exclusively in the framework of Burundi's national sovereignty and that aims — contrarily to the concerns expressed by some — at ensuring the long-term stability of the country by the end of the transitional period under the present Constitution.

It is clear that the United Nations and its Member States are in no way empowered to discuss the constitutional affairs of sovereign States. In assuming the right to comment on the draft constitutional referendum in Burundi, in paragraph 35 of the report, the Organization is flagrantly violating the principle of respect for the sovereign equality of States enshrined in in Article 2.7 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states

> "Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter".

The reference in the report to the review of the Constitution in Burundi in paragraphs 4 and 8 is a bold step that interferes in Burundi's domestic affairs. The Council should take note, since it is at variance with the Charter of the United Nations and is critical of the sovereign right of the Burundian people to amend their Constitution, but, in the past, the United Nations has not voiced its concerns in similar cases of constitutional amendments in the region or elsewhere in the world. The same report breaches Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, which stipulates that

> "The Organization and its Members, in pursuit of the Purposes stated in Article 1, shall act in accordance with ... the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members".

Such double standards in addressing the various situations within Member States must be discouraged so as not to set a dangerous precedent. In addition, in accordance with article 297 of the current Constitution of Burundi, the initiative to amend the Constitution lies with the President of the Republic, following consultations with the Government, the National Assembly and the Senate and on an absolute majority vote of their members. Article 298 of the Constitution states that "[t]he President of the Republic can submit to referendum a bill of amendment of the Constitution". In the light of those articles, it is clear that any request or comment that is above and beyond those two provisions violates the Constitution.

Contrary to paragraph 4 of the report, the new draft Constitution guarantees peace and stability, protection for the opposition, the protection of human rights and minorities, the protection of our national sovereignty, as well as ethnic and gender quotas, as stipulated in the 2000 Arusha Accords. All substantive articles of the Arusha Accords have been retained in the draft amendment. The security situation is generally good throughout the entire territory, with the exception of some isolated instances of crime, not exclusive to Burundi, as underscored by the Special Envoy and other speakers. This is the real situation on the ground in Burundi.

The country has taken an irreversible step forward on the path to peace, stability and national reconciliation. It must also be underscored that the mass return of refugees to the country and the fact that the Government of Burundi will be organizing and hosting the twentieth summit of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, following several

field assessment missions, demonstrates that normalcy has returned to our country.

In addition to those positive developments, a large delegation of elected members of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) visited Burundi. According to them,

> "We have seen and can confirm that the country is peaceful and calm. We call upon all elected members of the EALA to spread the word about Burundi's peaceful security environment. We also call upon investors, not only within the East African community, but also throughout the entire world, to invest in Burundi in an effort to boost its economy".

That statement was made by the elected members of the region with regard to the security situation in Burundi.

In addition, my delegation rejects paragraphs 20 and 41 of the report, which seek to single out the youth wing of the ruling party — Imbonerakure — as being responsible for instances of insecurity, instead of directly calling for restraint among all young people affiliated to political parties — ruling and opposition parties alike because security in Burundi, like elsewhere, affects us all.

The paragraphs are similar to other parts of the report that underscore its bias. I stress that there was no mention of young people in opposition parties, some of whom fled the country after killing and raping several innocent people, destroying public goods and preventing children from attending school during the 2015 elections. That part of the report, which singles out some young people in Burundi and not others, breaches the principle of neutrality recognized by the Charter of the United Nations.

With regard to human rights, I thank my colleague from Côte d'Ivoire, who drew my Government's attention to the human rights situation, of which we took note. Paragraphs 24 to 28 of the report addresses the human rights situation in the country. It must be underscored that despite the challenges we face, which are not exclusive to Burundi, the country has made significant progress at standard-setting and institutional levels.

With regard to standard-setting, various legal texts have been adopted, such as rules governing public meetings and demonstrations, the establishment of a special court for land tenure and other goods, the suppression of human trafficking and protection for victims of trafficking in persons, protection for victims, witnesses and other people in at-risk situations, preventing and reducing the incidences of gender-based violence, protecting the victims of gender-based violence, the press and non-profit organizations.

At the institutional level, Burundi remains very committed to protecting human rights through several national mechanisms, including the National Independent Human Rights Commission, which enjoys a status compliant with the Paris principles; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the National Observatory for the Prevention and Eradication of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity; the National Council for Unity and Reconciliation, the legal arsenal that abolished the death penalty in Burundi, as well as the myriad international conventions that have been ratified by the State of Burundi, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture. In addition, Burundi has submitted its report to the Universal Periodic Review, summarizing progress made and the challenges pending in the area of human rights. Burundi was on the agenda at the twenty-ninth session of the Universal Periodic Review on 18 January. During that meeting, Burundi welcomed constructive recommendations from Member States and regretted the fact that some were politicized, selective and demonstrated double standards.

With regard to national reconciliation, during his message to the nation on 31 December 2017, the President of the Republic pardoned approximately 2,000 prisoners, many of whom have been released. Others are about to join their families. Gestures of peace have also been made following the coup d'état during the 2015 elections. Two private radio stations that were destroyed within a few hours following the attempted coup d'état on 13 May 2015 have been re-opened. Fifteen arrest warrants issued against leaders of political parties and of civil society have been cancelled. More than 2,000 prisoners have been released. Such gestures should be supported and rewarded by the Council.

With regard to the return of refugees who fled the country in 2015, highlighted in paragraph 23 of the report, the Government of Burundi and subregional organizations continue to request that refugees return home to assist with the reconstruction of Burundi. It is thanks to the return to normalcy in the country, the pace of the voluntary repatriation of refugees has been satisfactory with the return of thousands of citizens

who sought refuge in Tanzania and the wider region. From 2016 to today, more than 200,000 Burundians have returned to the country on a voluntary basis, including 13,000 between August and December 2017, as my colleague Mr. Lauber noted. In 2018, Burundi expects more than 60,000 returnees from the region.

In the humanitarian field, my delegation appreciates any initiative of the international community to assist those in need, especially those in emergency situations, be it through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) or any other humanitarian organization. My delegation wishes to note, however, OCHA's lack of cooperation with the sectoral ministries concerned with humanitarian issues and the inflation of numbers in its preparation of its 2018 humanitarian response plan for Burundi. As a result of this lack of cooperation, the Government of Burundi, through its communiqué of 21 February, requested OCHA officials to work closely with the Burundian side to draw up a consensual report in keeping with the realities of the situation. The Government is willing to cooperate fully with OCHA in this regard.

With regard to cooperation with the United Nations, as many speakers have noted and as referred to in paragraphs 28, 42 and 43 of the report, Burundi maintains its desire to strengthen and sustain its relations with the United Nations and its branches on the ground. The draft agreement with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is under discussion between the two parties. In mid-January, Burundi asked the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva to propose to the Burundian side new dates for the resumption of discussions. Bujumbura awaits Geneva's response in this regard. For its part, the Government of Burundi reiterates its willingness to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other partners in a spirit of mutual respect and mutually beneficial cooperation and in accordance with the rules of the game enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, allow me to ask the Council to consider, to the extent possible, removing Burundi from its agenda since the situation in the country is generally calm and presents no threat to peace and international security, which is the main mission of the Council. I recall that there is no objective criterion that justifies maintaining on the Council's agenda the item on the situation in Burundi, a country that — as my colleague from Ethiopia noted — has more than 6,000 peacekeepers in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.*

United Nations S/PV.8190

# Security Council

Seventy-third year

*Provisional*

**8190**th meeting
Monday, 26 February 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

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|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Alotaibi | (Kuwait) |
| *Members:* | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mr. Inchauste Jordán |
| | China | Mr. Ma Zhaoxu |
| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue |
| | Equatorial Guinea | Mr. Ndong Mba |
| | Ethiopia | Mr. Alemu |
| | France | Mr. Delattre |
| | Kazakhstan | Mr. Umarov |
| | Netherlands | Mr. Van Oosterom |
| | Peru | Mr. Meza-Cuadra |
| | Poland | Ms. Wronecka |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Nebenzia |
| | Sweden | Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Allen |
| | United States of America | Ms. Eckels-Currie |

## Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 26 January 2018 from the Panel of Experts on Yemen mandated by Security Council resolution 2342 (2017) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/68)

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18-05193 (E)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Middle East**

**Letter dated 26 January 2018 from the Panel of Experts on Yemen mandated by Security Council resolution 2342 (2017) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/68)**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/2018/156 and S/2018/157, which contain the texts of two draft resolutions, respectively.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

**Mr. Allen** (United Kingdom): The Security Council has long recognized that the situation in Yemen threatens international peace and security. It has caused the world's largest humanitarian crisis, which gets worse by the day. The conflict creates ungoverned spaces in which terrorists can operate, poses security threats to countries in the region and international shipping, and fuels regional tensions.

While international attention is rightly focused on the horror that continues to unfold in Syria, the Council must not ignore the appalling situation in Yemen. We have a duty to respond, using all the tools at our disposal. We must show unity of effort and purpose to put an end to this terrible and destabilizing conflict. That is why we have submitted draft resolution S/2018/156, which is before us today.

The United Nations sanctions regime is a critical tool that we must use to pressurize the individuals and organizations bent on undermining peace and security in Yemen. We welcome the work of the Panel of Experts, which has played a key role in supporting the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) in carrying out its mandate, including through the provision of recommendations regarding the implementation of measures decided upon in resolutions 2140 (2014) and 2216 (2015). It is vital that the Panel's work continue.

Furthermore, we in the Council must not ignore the growing ballistic-missile threat emanating from Yemen, which gravely threatens international peace and security. Attacks such as those launched on 22 July, 4 November and 19 December against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia are unacceptable. They undermine the prospects for peace, prolong the conflict and put civilian lives at risk. The Council must speak out with a united voice against such attacks. We can do this by voting in favour of the draft resolution before us today, which strongly condemns these attacks.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned about the fact that Iran failed to take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale or transfer of short-range ballistic missiles, missile propellant and unmanned aerial vehicles to what was then the Houthi-Saleh alliance, as reported by the Panel of Experts. We agree with the Panel's assessment that in the light of that, Iran is in non-compliance with paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015). Iran, and other States that violate Security Council resolutions, must be held accountable for it. The Council must stand firm in the face of non-compliance by States and send a clear message that it will not be tolerated. That is what the Charter of the United Nations demands from us — respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law.

We are also deeply concerned about the growing humanitarian crisis in Yemen. A record 22.2 million people are now in need of assistance, which is 3.4 million more than last year. Last year's United Nations humanitarian appeal was only 70 per cent funded, and this year's appeal stands at $2.96 billion. We encourage all Member States to respond fully to it. Restrictions on vital humanitarian access continue to be imposed by all the parties to the conflict. The United Nations Panel of Experts has made the impact of access restrictions on the people of Yemen clear. Draft resolution S/2018/156, which the members of the Council have before them, therefore calls for full and unfettered access for humanitarian and commercial cargo through all of Yemen's ports, including Hudaydah and Salif, and for supplies to be increased beyond pre-November levels.

This is an important year. With a new United Nations Special Envoy in place, it is vital that the international community redouble its efforts to achieve a political solution to the conflict. We call on all the parties to the conflict to resolve their differences through dialogue and consultation, and to refrain from

provocation. Until an enduring political settlement is reached, we must maintain the sanctions regime in order to deter those who would otherwise use violence to achieve their political aims.

The United Kingdom has worked hard with all Council members in order to reach consensus on a draft resolution that responds to our concern about all the ongoing political, security, economic and humanitarian challenges in Yemen, and the threats arising from the illicit transfer and misuse of weapons. Today we spent more than five hours in detailed talks with delegations, and we have proposed a number of compromises. I am personally grateful for the patience that everyone has showed today. We have tried to agree on a text that provides a balanced and impartial assessment of the situation in Yemen but that does not shy away from calling out those whose actions undermine international peace and security.

Today we must show that we in the Council are united against a threat to Yemen's future. We must also send a clear message that we support the independence and integrity of the Panel of Experts. We in the Council rely on those independent expert international panels. We may not always like all of their reports, and we may find their conclusions politically inconvenient, but if we want the United Nations to function, we should support them in their work.

Those who do not vote in favour of the draft resolution today are preventing us from sending a clear message to those who seek to undermine peace and security in Yemen and the region beyond. They are also failing in their duty to do all they can to uphold the international rules-based system and hold States that violate resolutions agreed on by the Council to account. With that in mind, I strongly urge everyone here to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation will not be able to support draft resolution S/2018/156, proposed by our British colleagues, on the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to paragraph 19 of resolution 2140 (2014) on sanctions against Yemen, but we do not want any misunderstanding in that regard. While we fully endorse the majority of the draft resolution's provisions, we cannot concur with its unconfirmed conclusions and evidence, which will require verification and discussion by the Sanctions Committee.

We agree with extending the embargo, and we did everything we could to achieve adoption of the draft resolution today, without proposing even a single compromise on the wording. Unfortunately, however, we were unable to get there. We are generally in principle against a politicized approach to the technical rollover of the Sanctions Committee's Panel of Experts, one whereby their assistance is used to decide neither technical nor expertise issues but geopolitical ones, at a time when the situation in Yemen is far more complicated than the frequent attempts to lead us to believe otherwise would have it. Incidentally, we spoke about the importance of continuing such expert work just three days ago, when the Russian Federation sent a request to the Secretariat to clarify certain details regarding the use of arms in Yemen to which we have not yet had an answer. During the expert consultations we — and we were not the only ones — clearly explained our disagreement with a number of provisions in the draft resolution based on selective and contentious conclusions of the Panel of Experts.

I should point out that during the discussion of the final report of the Sanctions Committee, there was no consensus-based approach. We tried to convey to our colleagues that assessing the conclusions of the Panel of Experts before the 2140 Committee has formulated a final evaluation of them is wrong and premature. Unfortunately, our concerns, which we know are shared by many delegations, were disregarded.

Voting on a draft resolution that does not have the approval of all of its members divides the Security Council at a time when it desperately needs unity. To be blunt, the wording of the draft resolution proposed by the United Kingdom could have seriously destabilizing consequences, not just for the situation in Yemen but for the entire region, which would inevitably escalate regional tensions and opposition among key players. We have frequently said that we see a grave danger in playing fast and loose with geopolitical cards, and that includes the highly volatile relations between Sunni and Shiite within the Islamic world. Rather than making relations in the Middle East more antagonistic, we should be taking steps aimed at reaching agreement through mutually respectful dialogue.

We have repeatedly proposed an alternative and viable plan for united action that assumes that the focus should be, not on sanctions or pressure, but on genuinely concerted efforts to seek ways to resolve crisis situations. We should begin by coming up with ways to launch a

dialogue. The Russian Federation previously proposed an initiative for starting inclusive regional discussions on confidence- and security-building in the region of the Persian Gulf. The course of events has shown that such a format would be valuable for the entire Middle Eastern region as well. Security should be reciprocal, regional and indivisible. We should also point out that the potential of resolution 598 (1987) is still unrealized. It directs the Secretary-General to work collaboratively with all interested parties to devise an architecture for security in the region.

In order to avoid undermining the Security Council's unity, its resolutions should be unpolitical and predominantly technical in nature. We support extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts. However, provisions that can potentially lead to action under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations must be rooted in verified facts. The Committee should be given more information, and in that regard the Panel's work should continue. As an alternative, therefore, we propose adopting a technical draft resolution on extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Sanctions Committee for Yemen that we request be put to a vote today.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): The Council is now ready to vote on the two draft resolutions. I shall first put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/156, submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour*:

Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

*Against*:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Russian Federation

*Abstaining*:

China, Kazakhstan

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): The draft resolution received 11 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now put to the draft resolution contained in document S/2018/157, submitted by the Russian Federation.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour*:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2402 (2018).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

**Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America): Today, Russia accused the majority of the Security Council of attempting to destabilize the region by supporting the United Kingdom's draft resolution (S/2018/156). This is perverse, when in fact Russia's veto today serves only to protect Iran's efforts to destabilize the region and spread its malign influence.

The Security Council's failure to pass the United Kingdom draft resolution today has set back our collective efforts to promote peace in Yemen. Not all Member States are responsible for this egregious failure, but we will all have to deal with its consequences — continuing conflict and suffering in Yemen and the possibility of a wider war in the region. The report of the Security Council's Panel of Experts on Yemen (see S/2018/68) has laid out in devastating detail the evidence of Iran's ongoing destructive defiance of the Security Council's resolutions. The Panel has found significant evidence that Iran has violated the Yemen arms embargo established by the Council in 2015 in resolution 2216 (2015).

Iran failed to prevent the transfer of ballistic missiles, related military equipment and unmanned aerial-vehicle technology to the Houthi militants. And how did the Panel know? It knew because the ballistic missiles launched by the Houthis, which struck near civilian areas in Saudi Arabia, were found to be Iranian origin. As the United States intelligence community has long known, Iranian weapons are getting into the

hands of Yemeni militias, and these militias are using them to target the capitals of Yemen's neighbours.

In response, the United Kingdom's draft resolution was a simple common-sense one. It called out Iran for giving the Houthis the tools to threaten Yemen's neighbours and to threaten freedom of navigation through the Red Sea. But this common-sense attempt to hold Iran accountable has failed, and all members of the Council should be aware of the potential consequences. The Panel of Experts warned that the Houthis' use of ballistic missiles against Saudi Arabia has "the potential to turn a local conflict into a broader regional one" (*S/2018/68, p. 2*).

In the Council, we talk a lot about using preventive diplomacy. It is in fact how we fulfil the mandate of the Charter of the United Nations to maintain peace and security. Today, preventive diplomacy has failed. We have rolled over the sanctions but we have not targeted the party that is destabilizing Yemen. The principles of the United Nations Charter have been betrayed and, as a result, the world is a step closer to a worsening confrontation in the Middle East.

Our partners have spoken often about their desire to address the Iranian regime's regional misbehaviour in the context of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We thank those members of the Council who stood by this commitment today. Their votes in support of the United Kingdom draft resolution sent the clear message that they expect Iran to live up to its international obligations.

Russia, Bolivia, China and Kazakhstan sent an opposite but equally clear message. Instead of demanding accountability from Iran, they decided to shield Iran from responsibility. Instead of protecting their fellow Member States, they have declined to step in and defend partners like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. And instead of insisting that Iran live up to its international obligations, they have invited Iran to continue promoting chaos in the Middle East. Their actions will not be forgotten, nor will they go unanswered.

Today's vote was a deep disappointment, but this is far from the end of the road to accountability for Iran. Across the region, Iran is entrenching itself. We see this in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. It is flouting its obligations under multiple Security Council resolutions as we speak, and it is making the world a more dangerous place. We will not hesitate to continue to make the world aware of Iran's misdeeds, and we will not stop until Teheran is stopped and peace is once more possible for the people of the Middle East.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2402 (2018), which renews the Yemen sanctions regime. I would like to thank the United Kingdom, as penholder, for its efforts and commitment to seeking a consensus to renew the sanctions regime. We regret that it was not possible to reach consensus on the its draft resolution.

As we have repeatedly said to all our Security Council partners, France's priority was to renew the sanctions regime. That is why we voted in favour of a technical renewal of resolution 2140 (2014). It was essential that the sanctions regime be maintained and that the Panel of Experts be renewed so that it could continue its work in the coming year. We have already expressed our concern at the conclusions of the report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen (see S/2018/68), which states that Iran is in non-compliance with the arms embargo imposed by resolution 2216 (2015). We have also expressed our deep concern about the Houthis' ballistic-missile launches into Saudi Arabia and the Red Sea, which we have repeatedly condemned.

I would like to be very clear on this point. We strongly condemn Iran's failure to comply with its international obligations under resolution 2216 (2015), which requires it to take all necessary measures to prevent the supply, sale or transfer — direct or indirect — of missiles and their components, as well as unmanned aerial vehicles, for the benefit of individuals and entities subject to United Nations sanctions, in particular the Houthis. France will continue to be mobilized on the issue of transfers of ballistic technology and equipment in the region in the coming months.

As the report of the Panel of Experts also shows, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate in a very worrying manner. We are very concerned about the Panel's report on the massive violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that have been committed. Continued fighting and strikes have resulted in the deaths of many civilians and injured many others. Yemen is in a situation of extreme humanitarian emergency, with severe food insecurity, and lack of desperately needed basic necessities and a severely affected health sector.

The coalition's humanitarian plan is a positive first step that should be welcomed and put in place

in full coordination with the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. Our priority must remain to address the crisis, which is among the most serious in the world, by ensuring full, secure and unhindered humanitarian access to the affected populations in all governorates of Yemen.

Finally, in parallel with our commitment to the humanitarian aspect, we must remain mobilized to launch new essential political momentum. The appointment of the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Yemen, Martin Griffiths, provides an opportunity for all parties to meaningfully re-engage in the negotiations without preconditions.

Furthermore, we must continue to convey to regional actors the message of the need for a responsible and constructive role in Yemen. The goal of us all must remain to achieve a lasting cessation of hostilities and, in support of the United Nations mediation, to encourage the parties to resume the dialogue with a view to a comprehensive and inclusive political agreement that respects the territorial integrity of the country. The unity of the Council in that regard is crucial. Individually and collectively, we each have a important role to play to that end.

**Mr. Ma Zhaoxu** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Recently, the situation in Yemen has further deteriorated with the stalled political process, a protracted military conflict and the dire humanitarian situation. China is deeply concerned about the current situation in Yemen. We call on the international community to step up its mediation efforts in order to impel the Yemeni parties to cease hostilities and to resume the negotiations for a political settlement so that peace, security and stability can be restored in Yemen as soon as possible.

The renewal of the Security Council targeted sanctions on Yemen and the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen can help to advance the political resolution of the issue, strengthen the international effort to facilitate peace, and serve the interests of both Yemen and the countries of the region. China therefore firmly supports the renewal of the targeted sanctions and the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts.

Resolution 2402 (2018), which was submitted by the Russian Federation and has just been adopted by the Security Council, decides to renew the targeted sanctions and to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts for one year. China welcomes the adoption of the resolution, for which it voted in favour. The resolution reflects the broadest possible consensus within the Security Council. It can help to advance the political resolution of the issue and to strengthen the efforts of the international community. It serves the interests of both Yemen and the countries of the region.

Draft resolution S/2018/156, submitted by the United Kingdom, proposes renewing the targeted sanctions and extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts for a year. That reflects the consensus among the members of the Council, which we welcome. Meanwhile, there remain significant differences and disagreement among the members of the Council on some elements of the draft resolution. We believe that the matter under consideration is extremely complex and delicate. It is inadvisable for the Council to reach a hasty conclusion in the absence of adequate evidence. We believe that the members of the Council should patiently continue consultations, meet each other half way, strive to achieve consensus and maintain the unity of the Council so as to give full play to the sanctions mechanism and to advance a political solution.

China has always held an objective and impartial position on the question of Yemen. We do not have a hidden agenda. We support the unity, sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Yemen. We believe that a political solution is the only way to achieve lasting peace in Yemen. We call on all parties to support the United Nations mediation efforts and to promptly reach an inclusive solution through dialogue and negotiation on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council, its means of implementation and the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference. We hope that the countries of the region can overcome their differences through dialogue and negotiation.

China voted on draft resolutions S/2018/156 and S/2018/157 on the basis of the consistent position that I have just outlined. We were actively engaged in the consultations, having played a constructive role through our tireless efforts towards building consensus.

We regret that some countries have made unfounded accusations against the principled positions of other countries, despite the facts. Such practices, which will not help to resolve the issue under consideration or to preserve the unity of the Council, are totally unacceptable to us.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom, in its capacity as penholder for issues relating to Yemen, for its efforts to reach a compromise acceptable to all members of the Council on the renewal of the relevant sanctions regime. Our support for the two draft resolutions (S/2018/156 and S/2018/157) that we considered is based primarily on our conviction of the importance of preserving the aforementioned sanctions regime in order to contribute to ending the conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

We believe that it is necessary to deter and to limit the capacity for action of the individuals or entities that threaten peace, security and stability in that country in order to promote the achievement of a political solution. We are committed to that, in particular since the Council has entrusted us with the responsibility of chairing the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014). That is a task that we hope to fulfil with equanimity and impartiality, working constructively with all the members of the Council. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of always considering developments in Yemen in a balanced way, with respect for due process and on the basis of the available evidence.

Peru condemns the launching of missiles against the territory of Saudi Arabia, among various other equally condemnable events and actions that are also mentioned in the most recent report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen (see S/2018/68), some of which have serious humanitarian consequences on the territory of Yemen. We believe that, in that context, it is essential to ensure that the Panel of Experts can continue to conduct impartial and detailed assessments on the implementation of the sanctions regime and on the current situation on the ground for the due consideration of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) and of the Council.

We also believe that it is necessary to provide all necessary means to the new Special Envoy and to support him in his difficult task of re-establishing dialogue and trust among all the parties involved in the conflict.

**Mr. Inchauste Jordán** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia voted against draft resolution S/2018/156, submitted by the United Kingdom, because during the only consultations the draft resolution did not enjoy the support of all the members of the Council and, despite the repeated remarks and concerns expressed, including breaking the silence, such considerations were not taken into account. In addition, before today's meeting, Bolivia supported the proposal of a technical rollover that would make it possible to overcome the impasse.

Bolivia will not apologize to anyone for defending the principles in which we believe, in particular the sovereign equality of States. We regret that further consultations did not take place in order to ensure a text that took the remarks of all members into account. We also regret the fact that there was no attempt to reach agreements that allowed for a balanced text and emphasized the situation that Yemen is experiencing. Moreover, the tendency to involve other regional actors in the crisis that Yemen is undergoing, based on the argument that new members of the Council have yet to reach an agreement, is irresponsible.

Lastly, my delegation is concerned about the fact that there have again been attempts to use the Security Council as a political tool with clearly unilateral agendas that run completely counter to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

**Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni** (Sweden): I will be brief today, as the Security Council will address the political and humanitarian situation in Yemen tomorrow.

Sweden welcomes the renewal of the sanctions regime pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) and the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen. Sweden approached today's voting from a position of principle, as we are fully committed to the effective use of sanctions as one of our many tools for restoring and maintaining international peace and security. We strongly support the United Nations panel-of-experts instruments, and it is important that the Council uphold the integrity, independence and effectiveness of its sanctions instruments and panels. Lastly, concerning the resolution's substance, we reiterate that the arms embargo is a vital part of the sanctions regime that must be upheld, as should the resolution's calls for all parties to comply with international humanitarian law and to provide humanitarian access.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the adoption of resolution 2402 (2018), on the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen mandated by Security Council resolution 2342 (2017) and the renewal of sanctions pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), and we thank

all the delegations that supported it. Its unanimous adoption creates an opportunity for further joint work on reaching a settlement for Yemen and improving the situation in the region in general. We assume that the Panel will continue to carefully investigate the information on rockets launched against Saudi Arabian territory, which we condemn in the strongest terms.

We stress once again that we need a united approach from all international and regional stakeholders, including, needless to say, Saudi Arabia and Iran, if we are to deal with the fundamental issues in the region. The Russian Federation supports and values its relations with all the Arab States, including Saudi Arabia and Iran, and we will continue to build on those relations with the aim of improving the situation in the region, where peace must, ultimately, be established.

I would like to respond to the United States representative's remarks. We withheld our support to draft resolution S/2018/156, proposed by the United Kingdom, not because we wanted to kill it by any means possible, but because we were unable to reach agreement on the wording of a few specific but key sections. I spoke about this earlier. After all, the goal of the draft resolution is to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen, not to hold Iran accountable or attempt to cobble together an anti-Iran coalition. The United States representative's statement showed that our concerns in that regard were well founded. In any event, we are grateful to all the members of the Council for making the right decision today.

**Mr. Van Oosterom** (Netherlands): We regret that draft resolution S/2018/156, submitted by the United Kingdom, was not adopted. We voted in favour of resolution 2402 (2018) because the sanctions regime and the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen needed to be renewed. We strongly support the Panel and the sanctions regime in question. We regret that our concerns regarding non-compliance with the arms embargo, violations of humanitarian law and problems with humanitarian access are not adequately addressed in the resolution that was adopted. We feel very strongly that the Security Council should address the humanitarian crisis as a separate Council product, and we hope that a text to that effect can be finalized as soon as possible.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to call on all the parties to work with the newly appointed United Nations Envoy to achieve an inclusive political solution.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Kuwait.

The State of Kuwait voted in favour of the first version of draft resolution S/2018/156, submitted by the United Kingdom, because it renews the sanctions regime mandated by resolutions 2140 (2014) and 2216 (2015). The draft resolution also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen mandated by resolution 2342 (2017), and contained important language that made it possible for the Council to address a dangerous aspect of the Yemeni crisis that it should pay more attention to — the smuggling of ballistic missiles into Yemeni territory, which the Houthis launched against our sister State of Saudi Arabia, firing a total of 95 missiles by 5 February. We condemn those acts by the Houthis in the strongest terms.

The Houthis have also claimed that they have launched such missiles against the sister State of the United Arab Emirates and have announced that they intend to wage such attacks against Saudi Arabia and other States in the region. This represents a dangerous development and a challenge to the entire international community. It undermines every effort aimed at reaching the political solution we want that can end the crisis in our brother State of Yemen. We underscore our position that we stand fully with our brothers in Saudi Arabia and support all measures designed to maintain its peace and security.

We are all members of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), on sanctions against Yemen. We read the report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen (S/2018/68) concerning the fact that the Houthis have been receiving support from outside parties, especially arms that were sent to Yemen after the arms embargo. That constitutes a clear violation of paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015), and we therefore call on all States Members of the United Nations to comply with the arms embargo and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In conclusion, we underscore that a political solution in Yemen should be based on paragraph 1 of resolution 2216 (2015). We should bear in mind the three references that were agreed on: the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementing mechanism, the outcome of the Yemeni National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015), which is the cornerstone for a resolution of the crisis in

Yemen. The sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen must be maintained.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

*The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.8191

# Security Council

Seventy-third year

*Provisional*

**8191**st meeting

Tuesday, 27 February 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Alotaibi | (Kuwait) |
| *Members:* | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mr. Inchauste Jordán |
| | China | Mr. Shen Bo |
| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue |
| | Equatorial Guinea | Mr. Ndong Mba |
| | Ethiopia | Mr. Alemu |
| | France | Mr. Delattre |
| | Kazakhstan | Mr. Umarov |
| | Netherlands | Mr. Van Oosterom |
| | Peru | Mr. Meza-Cuadra |
| | Poland | Ms. Wronecka |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Nebenzia |
| | Sweden | Mr. Orrenius Skau |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Hickey |
| | United States of America | Ms. Eckels-Currie |

**Agenda**

The situation in the Middle East

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in the Middle East**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

**Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed** (*spoke in Arabic*): This is my last briefing to the Council before my assignment as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen comes to an end.

I began my assignment in April 2015, when Yemen was already embroiled in a conflict that has gradually destroyed its economy, health-care services, housing, roads and schools — everything that Yemenis need in order to live and prosper. The parties have maintained the destructive pattern of zero-sum politics that has plunged the country into more poverty and destruction. The decision makers in the conflict perceive concessions as weakness and dissent as a threat. Regrettably, they have consistency taken irresponsible and provocative actions that ignore the daily suffering of Yemenis generated by this conflict.

The past two months have witnessed a renewed and large-scale escalation of military confrontation in Al-Hudaydah, Al-Jawf, Sana'a and Al-Bayda, as well as areas along the Yemeni-Saudi border. The Houthis continue to fire ballistic missiles into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Fighting in Taiz governorate has been particularly bloody and destructive, while Aden and the neighbouring governorates have been the scenes of continuous clashes. During the latest outbreak of violence in the city on 28 January, dozens of people were killed and hundreds more were injured. I reiterate my call on all stakeholders in Aden to demonstrate self-restraint and avoid any inflammatory speech. I urge them to resolve their differences in a peaceful and constructive manner through dialogue.

I am also seriously concerned about reports from several humanitarian organizations on the recruitment of thousands of child soldiers by all parties to the conflict, which constitutes a flagrant violation of children's rights. While the reports indicate that all warring parties have engaged in such practices, the systematic recruitment of children by the Houthis may have negative implications for the future of the country. Parties must adhere to international law and international humanitarian law. Any intentional or direct attack on civilians or civilian objects is a serious violation of international humanitarian law. The parties must respect the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and ensure the access of affected populations to humanitarian assistance.

As the conflict has deepened, the economic and humanitarian crisis has deepened with it, making Yemen the world's largest man-made humanitarian crisis. John Ging will brief the Council on that issue. Since 2015, Yemen's economy has shrunk by almost 40 per cent. In 2017, the value of the Yemeni rial dropped by more than 50 per cent. The decline of the currency and the related sharp increase in prices have had a negatively affected the economy and have thereby hampered the delivery of basic supplies.

These factors have had a direct affect on the private sector and the payment of salaries of the public-sector employees. Undoubtedly, the non-payment of salaries for more than a year constitutes a massive burden on Yemeni citizens. Indeed, it has become clear that revenues that should be contributing to salary payments, maintaining basic services and stimulating the economy are instead being used to fund the war. Moreover, informal taxation and other forms of corruption are flourishing, exacerbating the humanitarian situation. These factors mean that Yemeni households are losing their purchase power and access to basic services. Some 22.2 million Yemenis are now in need of some form of humanitarian assistance, compared to 15.9 million in March 2015.

In the context of these appalling and vast humanitarian challenges, I welcome the generous

pledge of $1 billion by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to support humanitarian action and reconstruction in Yemen, as well as their commitment to raising an additional $500 million from other donors in the region. I hope that these initiatives will materialize and that the funds pledged will be disbursed as soon as possible so as to improve the current precarious situation.

Yemeni women humanitarianave suffered some of the worst effects of the conflict. The space for women to exercise their rights is shrinking every day. I have heard many Yemeni women saying that they live in a big prison where their freedom of speech is restricted. Those who speak up face the constant threat of persecution and violent attempts to silence them. However, despite these daily challenges, Yemeni women are remarkably resilient and their inclusion in the peace process is critical. The same applies to young people in Yemen.

I would like to express my gratitude to the World Bank for its innovative approach in Yemen, which is unique to a country in conflict. The partnership between my Office and the World Bank, in collaboration with the United Nations country team, has contributed not only to the alleviation of the suffering of some of the most vulnerable families, but also to the long-term preservation of Yemen's institutions.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the group of 18 Ambassadors with accreditation to Yemen and the States that have hosted talks with the parties, including Switzerland, Kuwait and Oman. During the past few weeks, I have visited several countries of the region, as well as the Gulf Cooperation Council secretariat. They are fully aware of the importance of a peaceful solution to this conflict in order to stabilize the region and fight terrorism.

Over the past three years, and throughout my continuous meetings with the parties, I have come to believe that a solid foundation for an agreement has been laid through the endorsement of the general framework in Biel in 2015 and the discussions that took place in Kuwait in 2016. Those who follow the Yemen file closely will acknowledge that the United Nations has spared no effort to help the Yemeni parties reach a peaceful solution. During the course of my interactions with the parties, we have discussed all the details of a peace road map with a clear timeline, taking into account the parties' needs and challenges. Today, I would like to announce, for the first time, that we were about to reach agreement on a peace proposal, developed in consultation with the parties, but they refused to sign at the last minute. By the end of the consultations, it had become clear that the Houthis were not prepared to make concessions on the proposed security arrangements or even to go into details about a comprehensive security plan. This has been a major stumbling block towards reaching a negotiated solution.

We see daily reports of civilians dying of poverty, hunger or illness, but we should not forget that many politicians from all sides are profiting from this conflict, from trading in arms to exploiting public property for personal purposes. In their speeches, these politicians may stir up strife to deepen the rift in the Yemeni society; at other times, they declare pro-peace positions, while in private they are indifferent to the suffering of their people. Whoever wants peace offers solutions, not excuses.

We have a peace road map for Yemen. The practical suggestions to launch it and build confidence among the parties have been agreed. The only part missing is the commitment of parties to making concessions and giving priority to the national interest. This is what makes us doubtful of their real intention to end the war. I wish the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, every success in his efforts, which I have no doubt will benefit from his wide-ranging experience in diplomacy. I hope that the road map will constitute a cornerstone for moving forward and activating the peace process.

To conclude, let me offer a promise, convey my thanks and issue an appeal.

I promise the Yemeni people that I will follow up on the file with the concerned and share my experience and knowledge of the Yemeni issue in any possible way that will contribute to peace. I was in Yemen before becoming a Special Envoy and I have experienced the courage and manners of the people of Yemen. I will follow the progress of the file until Yemen returns to Yemen, even after the end of my assignment.

My thanks also go out to the members of the Council and the international community for their support to the United Nations-led mediation efforts during the past three years, including the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The call goes to the Yemeni parties, who are solely responsible for everything that is happening. I

call on them to turn the page on this appalling war in history of Yemen. The United Nations is facilitating the path towards peace, and the international community is creating a favourable environment for it. Only the Yemeni decision-makers can stop the war and the bloodshed. I repeat: only they can do that.

The regional scenario is replete with challenges, political and sectarian disputes and economic pressures. There is no doubt that the developments in recent months in Yemen will reshuffle the political cards and change some internal blocs, especially considering the pressure and challenges encountered by the General People's Conference, in addition to the emergence of popular calls from the south voicing their demands. I call on the parties to cease hostilities and reactivate negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement. I urge them to allow the culture of coexistence to prevail over the rhetoric of war, so that Yemen becomes a beacon of light in the Middle East and a model for peace and security where men and women, young men and women, from the east and the west and from the north and south participate in decision-making.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ging.

**Mr. Ging**: I provide this update to the Security Council today on behalf of Mr. Mark Lowcock, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

After three years of conflict, conditions in Yemen are catastrophic. A record 22.2 million people need humanitarian assistance or protection, including 8.4 million people who are severely food-insecure. About 400,000 children under the age of 5 are so severely malnourished that they are 10 times likelier to die without treatment than their healthy peers. Approximately 2 million people remain displaced, 90 per cent of whom fled their homes more than a year ago. Nearly 1.1 million are suspected of having cholera. That has been reported since April 2017, in what experts have called the world's worst cholera outbreak. An estimated 3 million women and girls are at risk of gender-based violence.

Those figures represent an urgent call to action that humanitarian workers, the vast majority of whom are Yemeni citizens, are striving to answer. Working with nearly 200 partners, the United Nations-coordinated response is making a tremendous difference for millions of people across the country. In 2017, we progressively increased the number of people receiving emergency food assistance every month, from 3 million to more than 7 million. We delivered enough medicine to health facilities to treat 3.2 million people and conducted 1.5 million medical consultations. By maintaining public water networks, we ensured access to drinking water for 2 million people, in addition to trucking water directly to nearly 1 million more of the most vulnerable in December alone. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network estimates that nine of Yemen's 22 governorates would be one step closer to famine, or worse, without humanitarian assistance.

And yet people's lives have continued to unravel. Conflict has escalated significantly since November, driving an estimated 100,000 people from their homes, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. More people are going hungry, and famine remains a real threat. Although cholera cases are in decline, the disease is not yet beaten and is likely to rebound in the upcoming rainy season. In the meantime, a diphtheria outbreak has emerged, the first since 1982. Those are the consequences of a man-made crisis that only a political solution can bring to an end.

The most urgent task for all parties is to cease hostilities and engage meaningfully with the United Nations to achieve a lasting political settlement. In the meantime, as noted by the Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator to the Council in November, there are other areas where we need to see immediate progress. Those priorities were conveyed to the Governments of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, as well as to the authorities in Sana'a, with assurances from all parties that they would swiftly be implemented. Therefore, allow me to update members on where we stand.

The first issue concerns the resources needed for an effective response. In January, the United Nations and partners released the 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan, which requires $2.96 billion to assist 13.1 million people. Securing full funding for the plan is a top priority, which is why the Emergency Relief Coordinator allocated $50 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund at the beginning of the year — the largest single allocation in its history. Later in January, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates announced a generous joint pledge of $1 billion for Yemen,

including $930 million for the humanitarian response plan. They also committed to raising $500 million from other donors in the region. In discussions this month, the Saudi and Emirati Governments confirmed that they would transfer $930 million by 31 March and outlined grant management terms very much in keeping with the spirit of the "grand bargain". Other donors have also stepped forward. But even with the support announced to date, the humanitarian response plan would remain only about one-third funded. On 3 April, the Secretary-General will convene a pledging conference in Geneva, hosted by Sweden and Switzerland, where all donors will have an opportunity to work together to provide the resources needed for the response.

The second issue is humanitarian access into and within the country, which all parties are required to allow and facilitate under international humanitarian law. Such access must be safe, rapid and unimpeded. Access within Yemen — particularly in areas controlled by the Sana'a authorities — has deteriorated. Authorities in Sana'a continue to delay humanitarian movements and to impose bureaucratic impediments that interfere with humanitarian action. They include long delays in customs clearance for essential supplies, such as diphtheria treatment and fuel, ad hoc restrictions on movements of humanitarian partners and refusal to authorize humanitarian assessments. In recent weeks, humanitarian staff have also been temporarily detained without justification and their equipment confiscated at checkpoints. In practice, those restrictions are often eventually resolved through dialogue, but the time lost represents an unacceptable delay for people who need assistance. While the restrictions appear to have intensified in recent months, we remain optimistic that the Sana'a authorities may still honour the assurances given to the Emergency Relief Coordinator during his visit in October.

Access into Yemen has improved after the blockade imposed by the Coalition came to an end in December. United Nations flights and vessels have been travelling as scheduled since 26 November, and regular humanitarian staff rotations and cargo shipments have mostly resumed. We have also received assurances that there will be no further disruption to those services. Today our main challenge in entering Yemen is the Coalition policy to divert containerized cargo to Aden, including relief items shipped in containers aboard commercial vessels, which is often the most cost-effective option. That policy creates delays and higher operating costs. Sana'a airport remains closed to commercial traffic, thereby preventing thousands of patients from travelling abroad to seek medical care. We are hopeful that solutions can be found shortly.

The third issue is related to commercial imports. Even before the crisis, Yemen imported about 90 per cent of its staple food and nearly all medicine and fuel. Maintaining the flow of commercial imports through all ports is essential to people's survival. Most imports have historically arrived via Hudaydah, which is the closest port to 70 per cent of people in need. Disruptions to commercial import flows have immediate consequences, including in food prices, which are increasing, against the backdrop of the risk of famine. In January 2018, a food basket was on average 55 per cent more expensive than before the escalation of conflict in 2015.

Commercial food and fuel imports have only partially recovered. One factor appears to be the lack of confidence among commercial shippers. The number of vessels seeking clearance to enter Hudaydah and Saleef ports has halved since the blockade. The United Nations Verification and Inspection Mission is an effective system for screening imports bound for those ports, and there have recently been efforts to strengthen it further. Vessels cleared by that mechanism should be able to proceed directly to port without additional delays. Fuel imports are crucial for Yemen, including for the operation of public water networks and medical facilities. In January, United Nations agencies received 175,000 litres of fuel, provided by the Coalition, and distributed it to 16 health centres and water networks in the north and south. Such imports, which increase the commercial and humanitarian fuel supply, as well as other goods, must continue. For that to happen, Hudaydah and Saleef ports must remain open without time limits or other restrictions that may discourage commercial shipping companies from serving them.

The last major issue where we had hoped to see immediate progress relates to civil servant salary payments. Since August 2016, 1.2 million public employees and their families, or one quarter of the entire population, have not received regular salaries. Non-payment of salaries, including for approximately 30,000 health workers and 193,000 teachers, has accelerated the decline in public services, as workers seek alternative livelihoods. That has left families struggling to make ends meet. The resulting collapse in basic services has become a major driver of the

humanitarian crisis. The United Nations and its partners cannot replace the public sector and, while some salaries have reportedly been paid in the south, regular salary payments must quickly resume across the country.

Finally, it remains important to emphasize that protection concerns remain at the centre of the response. As mentioned, conflict has recently escalated, putting civilians at even greater risk. All parties to the conflict are obliged to take constant care to spare civilians and civilian infrastructure in military operations. Yet we continue to see civilian harm. Houthi-affiliated forces continue to shell populated areas, often resulting in civilian casualties. On 26 December, a Coalition air strike on a market in Taizz killed at least 60 civilians, including eight children, and wounded 32, including six children.

There are many such examples on all sides of the conflict. I call on all parties to uphold their obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Likewise, I urge Member States to take all possible steps to ensure that the parties to the conflict comply with the law and to support accountability for violations.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Ging for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Hickey** (United Kingdom): First, I would like to thank our briefers for their updates on the situation in Yemen. I also want to warmly thank Mr. Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his tireless efforts over the past three years to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. We recognize that it has been an incredibly challenging task and we appreciate everything he has done to bring the parties back the table and to create the conditions for sustainable peace, often at great personal risk to himself. I thank him on behalf of the United Kingdom. I would also like to welcome the appointment of Mr. Martin Griffiths as the new United Nations Special Envoy. I pledge the United Kingdom's full support for his future efforts.

As we have just heard from the United Nations, the conflict in Yemen has caused the world's most devastating humanitarian crisis. More than 22 million people, more than three-quarters of the population, are now in need of humanitarian assistance. Of those 22 million people more than half require immediate help to save or sustain life. They will not survive unless they receive assistance. The United Kingdom is committed to providing that assistance to the people of Yemen. We are the second-largest donor the United Nations Yemen appeal, and the third-largest donor to the United Nations overall. We provided $286 million to the appeal in the financial year 2017-2018. We also continue to work hard in order to reach consensus on a draft presidential statement from the Security Council aimed at responding to the recent developments on the ground.

Despite the devastating humanitarian situation, last year's appeal was only 70 per cent funded. This year, as the situation deteriorates further, we have just heard that the United Nations is requesting a record $2.96 billion. The recent pledge made by Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates to contribute $930 million to the 2018 appeal is very welcome, as is their commitment to disburse it by the end of March. The upcoming pledging conference, to be hosted by Sweden and Switzerland, is also an opportunity to respond to the United Nations appeal to help the starving people of Yemen. We call upon all donors to answer this call and ensure that all pledges are disbursed in a timely manner.

However, aid alone will not address the needs of the Yemeni people. Imports of food, fuel and medicine continue to remain well below levels of need. All parties to the conflict must allow unhindered commercial and humanitarian access throughout Yemen, which is essential to avert the risk of mass starvation. All plans and efforts to improve access are welcome. However, that can be no substitute for full and unhindered commercial and humanitarian access to the Red Sea ports of Hudaydah and Saleef. Eighty per cent of Yemen's imports enter the country through those ports. Other ports lack the necessary berthing, storage and milling capacities, and it takes days to transport goods by road across multiple conflict front lines to reach those in need.

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has not only given rise to the world's largest humanitarian crisis, it has also created ungoverned spaces in which terrorist can operate, posed security threats to regional countries and international shipping and fuelled regional tensions. That is demonstrated by the ballistic missile launches by the Houthis against civilian targets in Saudi Arabia and their stated intention to launch attacks against the United Arab Emirates and to block

the Red Sea international shipping lane. We agree with the Panel of Experts' conclusion that missiles fired by the Houthis — of Iranian origin and provided after the imposition of the arms embargo — mean that Iran is in non-compliance with paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015). We call upon Iran to cease all and any activity that fuels the conflict in Yemen. Until an enduring political settlement is reached, the sanctions regime is a critical tool to deter those who would otherwise use violence to achieve their political aims.

Humanitarian aid and access will provide only temporary relief for the people of Yemen. Ultimately, a political settlement is by far the best way to address the humanitarian crisis and security threats emanating from Yemen. We call upon all parties to engage constructively with the incoming Special Envoy and to abandon preconditions in order to restart the political process. All members of the Council should employ all of their influence over the parties to resolve their differences through dialogue and consultation.

**Mr. Van Oosterom** (Netherlands): Before I start, I would like to acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Parliament. Their attendance today is a great honour for my delegation.

I would like to convey our particular gratitude to Special Envoy Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his final briefing to the Security Council, and especially for his persistent efforts over the past three years in trying to bring the parties together to solve this terrible conflict. His words instil in us a powerful sense of urgency.

The human tragedy in Yemen, man-made and entirely avoidable, is one of the largest food and health crises the world has seen in decades. Today I will focus on three issues, namely, the political process, the humanitarian imperative and accountability.

First, regarding the political process, it is essential that all parties seize this moment to turn the negative trend of the past year around. As pointed out by the Panel of Experts, there is a grave risk of fragmentation in Yemen. If local grievances and regional divisions are not addressed, a political agreement is unlikely to last. Therefore, the political process must be an inclusive one. It should include a broad range of Yemeni groups, with the meaningful participation of women and youth.

That brings me to my second point, namely, the humanitarian imperative. In the absence of a political settlement, we draw the Council's attention to the humanitarian crisis. The protection of civilians from the armed conflict must be front and centre in our efforts. We have consistently condemned all indiscriminate attacks that have had a disastrous impact on the civilian population, including the Houthi ballistic missiles against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The people of Yemen suffer from the incessant fighting, and, as least as much, from the lack of food, water, sanitation, fuel and access to health care. Ensuring safe and unimpeded humanitarian access is not an act of mercy, it is an obligation under international law.

We welcome the positive steps that have been taken, including the installation of cranes at Hudeydah port and the generous pledge of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to the humanitarian response plan. Nonetheless, further steps are still needed, such as full and sustained access for all humanitarian and commercial shipments to all of Yemen's ports and airports. The Yemeni people cannot survive on humanitarian aid alone. Furthermore, all parties should fully cooperate with the work of the United Nations verification and inspection mechanism. Fast clearing services for shipping companies transporting commercial imports are pivotal. We call on all member States to refrain from inspecting vessels that have already been cleared by the mechanism. We will continue to work with all our partners in the Council to have those issues addressed in the presidential statement to be made in the coming days.

Let me also take this opportunity to salute those working both outside and inside of the country to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni population. The humanitarian community works under very difficult circumstances and it deserves our praise, gratitude and support.

My third point is on the issue of accountability. In recent months we have seen an increase in the number of civilian casualties. The obligations of all parties under international humanitarian law are very clear. We once again urgently call on all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law. Together we must foster adherence to the law. The Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen was mandated by the Human Rights Council to carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged violations and abuses and to identify those responsible. In that context, let me highlight in particular the rampant gender-based violence, as highlighted by Mr. Ging earlier. The Group of Experts

has begun its work, and should receive full support and access from all parties to fulfil its mandate.

In conclusion, we again demand meaningful political negotiations, humanitarian access and respect for the law. My Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sigrid Kaag, recently visited the region. She raised concerns about these persistent issues with all counterparts, thereby demonstrating our long-standing commitment to the Yemeni people. This year the Kingdom of the Netherlands marks 40 years of bilateral development cooperation with Yemen. We are long-standing partners. Therefore, Yemen remains a priority for us, both inside and outside of the Council.

My Minister also received encouraging messages suggesting that many parties are eager to engage with the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths. We welcome his appointment and assure him of our full support. Let us give him sufficient time to build on the work already done, talk to the parties and put forward his initial ideas. The Council should then consider further concrete steps on how to support his efforts. Only when the parties show the courage and leadership to make the necessary compromises and put the interests of the Yemeni people before their own will a sustainable political solution be possible.

**Mr. Delattre** (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of France, I would like to warmly thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, for his excellent briefing, outstanding work, exemplary commitment, tireless efforts and his determination in spite of difficult challenges and risks to his own life. I would like to convey my country's profound respect and gratitude for his efforts. I also thank Mr. John Ging for his briefing, which again underscored the extreme gravity of the situation.

I will focus my statement today on four main points — the political and security stalemate in Yemen, the ongoing deterioration of the humanitarian situation, the impact of the crisis on the region and the importance of an urgent resumption of the political process.

The situation in Yemen has become increasingly complex over recent years and weeks. Following the assassination of former President Saleh, a coalition of groups from the south of Yemen opposed to President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour has assumed control of the vast majority of Aden, where Government headquarters is located. That recent development has diminished the prospects for a political settlement, but should not serve to call into question the territorial sovereignty of Yemen, to which we are all deeply committed. There are several conflicts: between the Government of President Hadi and the Houthis, between the Houthis and the Arab coalition, between the supporters of former President Saleh and the Houthis, and between the groups from the south of Yemen and the Government. Al-Qaida- and Da'esh-affiliated groups are also present and active as the primary beneficiaries of the prevailing chaos.

The main victims of the many conflicts are civilians. The Yemeni people are plagued by a humanitarian disaster. Three quarters of the Yemeni people are in need of assistance. More than 2 million of them are displaced. More than 18 million are affected by food insecurity and at risk of starvation. There is dearth of basic necessities and health risks, such as diphtheria and cholera, remain high, as was eloquently mentioned earlier, at a time when health and medical infrastructure has been crippled. Our priority must be to address one of the worst crises in the world by delivering comprehensive, secure, unimpeded humanitarian access to the people affected in all Yemeni governorates. That access must guaranteed and sustained. The coalition's humanitarian plan is an encouraging step forward and should be commended. It is critical to ensure that it be effective and delivered in full cooperation with the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

Financial assistance for the Yemeni Central Bank is another step in the right direction in the light of economic difficulties that have just been mentioned. It is also essential that humanitarian and commercial goods transit through all ports, including Hudeydah and Saleef, and all airports, in particular Sana'a. The blockade must be lifted again to enable the greatest amount of predictability for humanitarian and commercial actors. Inspection efforts conducted by the United Nations verification and inspection mechanism to ensure that cargo entering Yemen does not contain goods that violate the embargo must continue. We continue to emphatically condemn any attempt to divert humanitarian assistance. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians must cease. International humanitarian law must be fully respected. The crisis also has an impact on security in the region. We are concerned about the continued deterioration of regional stability and security. Yesterday we voted on a technical roll-over of the sanctions regime, which will enable the Panel of Experts to continue their important work. However, we

regret that the Council was not able to agree on the first draft resolution vote on (S/2018/156).

We have voiced our concerns about the conclusions of the report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen issued on 15 February and have repeatedly condemned the ballistic-missile launches staged by the Houthis, specifically against Saudi Arabia. As we mentioned yesterday, France will remain galvanized on the question of the transfer of technology and ballistic material throughout the region in the months to come. This is an issue that the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, will address in Tehran during his visit on 5 March.

In this critical context, France's demands are clear, namely, a ceasefire and secure, comprehensive and unfettered humanitarian access. This is not optional but an obligation under international humanitarian law that is binding on all parties, which we would stress to all parties to the conflict. The more entrenched the conflict becomes, the more evident it appears that there can be no military solution in Yemen. The appointment of the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martin Griffiths, affords an opportunity for all parties to meaningfully re-engage, without preconditions, in the negotiations. We must continue to convey to regional actors a clear message about the importance of playing a responsible and constructive role in Yemen; this is critical.

Our common goal must remain to arrive at a lasting cessation of hostilities and to encourage the parties to rekindle dialogue, with a view to arriving at a comprehensive and inclusive political agreement in a manner that respects the country's territorial integrity.

In concluding, let me say that we hope that the resumption of the political process will help to break this disastrous deadlock. Let us be cautious, in this context, to avoid creating divisions among us that could have serious consequences. The unity and commitment of the Security Council on this issue are prerequisites to arrive at this necessary resumption of the political process. France will continue to spare no effort to achieve that end.

**Mr. Orrenius Skau** (Sweden): I, too, would like to begin by thanking the Special Envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, for his briefing to the Council today. As this is his final briefing as Special Envoy, I would like to acknowledge his determination, unwavering commitment and indispensable optimism over these last three years. It is hard to imagine a more difficult job. Let me also thank John for his sobering and frank briefing on the humanitarian situation.

It has been almost three months since the Council last met to discuss the situation in Yemen. This does not reflect the urgency on the ground. Since we last met, the violence has escalated, and civilian casualties have continued to mount; the humanitarian situation for ordinary Yemenis is deplorable and only getting worse. This suffering stems first and foremost from the conflict.

The Council's current efforts are clearly insufficient to meet our responsibility to alleviate the world's worst humanitarian crisis and to end this bloody conflict, which is now in its fourth year. In recent weeks, despite the well-known differences within the Council's membership, we have worked together to find consensus on responding to the humanitarian situation in Syria. It is now incumbent upon us to make the same effort when it comes to Yemen.

Today I would like to focus on how we can step up our efforts on both the humanitarian and political situation in Yemen.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, we have just heard from Mr. Ging what is needed to alleviate the indescribable suffering of the 22 million people in need of humanitarian assistance or protection.

First, the Council must strongly reiterate the call for a durable cessation of hostilities that we made in our presidential statement last June (S/PRST/2017/7).

Secondly, we must demand that all parties fully meet their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. This includes ensuring the protection of civilians, including the most vulnerable, by taking all precautions to avoid harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure. All attacks on civilians, including missile attacks by the Houthis, must be strongly condemned. We are also worried about reported attacks and threats against and the unlawful detention of journalists and other persons promoting freedom of expression.

Thirdly, we must help to ensure full and unhindered access for humanitarian and commercial shipments. The recent positive steps taken by the coalition, including the resumption of humanitarian flights and the delivery of cranes to Hudaydah, are welcome. It is now essential to ensure that all of Yemen's ports remain open and

fully functional and that their capacities increase. We call on all parties to refrain from any action that would restrict the flow of life-saving food, medicine and fuel.

Fourthly, the 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan needs to be fully funded in order to allow the United Nations and its partners to respond to the massive humanitarian needs. To that end, and as has already been noted this morning, Sweden and Switzerland, together with the United Nations, will host the 2018 High-level Pledging Event for Yemen on 3 April in Geneva. We encourage all Member States to participate and to pledge generously. We appreciate the generous pledges already made by the coalition.

Finally, as we were able to do over the weekend in response to the humanitarian situation in Syria, the Council should speak clearly and set the standards for responding to the humanitarian situation in Yemen. We should now focus our efforts on uniting around this task.

Moving to the political situation, the appointment of a new Special Envoy offers an opportunity to relaunch the political process. It is essential that the Council unite in giving strong practical support to the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, to create the conditions needed to seize this opportunity. Members of the Council and regional actors must use all their influence to ensure that the parties engage constructively with Mr. Griffiths, his Office and the United Nations-led process in good faith.

A political solution can be achieved only through a broad and inclusive political process. We should strive to help the Special Envoy to rekindle the initial spirit of the National Dialogue Conference and insist on meaningful political participation by a broad range of Yemeni actors, including women, youth and marginalized groups.

The situation in Yemen is desperate. Civilians live in constant fear for their lives. It is high time that the international community, including the Council, give the situation the attention it deserves.

**Ms. Eckels-Currie** (United States of America): First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his tireless commitment to resolving this conflict. The United States appreciates his leadership and advocacy for peace and security, especially his efforts on behalf of Yemeni women and children, the most innocent victims of this conflict. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours and appreciate his commitment to stay engaged in this issue. We also thank John for his sober and sombre assessment of the situation on the ground. We are grateful for the work that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations agencies are doing to alleviate human suffering in Yemen.

Now more than ever, it is critical that the United Nations continue its work towards resolving the situation in Yemen. Yemen is witness to the world's worst humanitarian crisis today. After three years of brutal civil war, 75 per cent of the population is now in need of humanitarian assistance. The most basic Government services are missing in many parts of the country. Houthi aggression, with the support of Iran, threatens stability in the region, and terrorist groups such as Da'esh and Al-Qaida have exploited this opportunity to pursue their twisted agendas. Only a political solution will provide the enduring peace and stability that the people of Yemen deserve, so we must do all we can to achieve that outcome. The leadership of the United Nations is absolutely essential, and the Council must give it full support to facilitate a successful political process. But as we work towards a political solution, it is imperative that we do everything we can to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the people of Yemen are met.

First, the people of Yemen must have access to and be able to afford essential goods. Since Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed's last briefing, we have been heartened by the arrival of the four mobile World Food Programme (WFP) cranes funded by the United States. Now that they are in place at Hudaydah port, it is imperative that we work to reduce the time to offload much-needed supplies. The United States welcomes the continued efforts by the Saudi-coalition to address the humanitarian situation in Yemen, including a pledge to provide $930 million by 31 March to the United Nations and humanitarian organizations.

We will continue to coordinate with the Saudi-led coalition, the United Nations, our international partners and humanitarian organizations to refine the Yemen comprehensive humanitarian operations plan, in order to ensure that it is thorough and coordinated with the international humanitarian response. The United States has provided more than $760 million in lifesaving humanitarian assistance since September 2016. We will continue to do our part to fund those urgent needs, as the United States always has. Similarly, we are pleased

that the Saudi-led coalition has agreed to keep the port of Hudaydah open to all commercial and humanitarian goods, including fuel. The most efficient and effective way to get food and fuel to those in need is through that port. The United States will continue to work with countries in the Saudi-led coalition to achieve additional improvements in humanitarian access.

In addition to addressing Yemen's humanitarian concerns, however, we must also recognize the very real security concerns of Saudi Arabia. As we discussed in the Council yesterday (see S/PV.8190), it is incumbent on the Council to directly address verifiable threats to peace and security in the region, and the main culprit behind them. As the Panel of Experts report (S/2018/68) makes clear, Iran is violating the targeted arms embargo laid out in resolution 2216 (2015). Specifically, the Panel found that missiles fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels into Saudi Arabia last year were of Iranian origin and introduced into Yemen after the imposition of the targeted arms embargo.

We saw the Russian delegation wield a veto yesterday to prevent the Yemen sanctions resolution from including a mention of Iran's activities in Yemen. However, the evidence shows quite clearly that ballistic missiles were Iranian in origin. Last month in Washington, D.C., Council members saw at first-hand some of the evidence implicating Iran. Eleven Council members agreed with us that such concerns merited mention in the sanctions resolution, and only two Council members voted against it. We will continue to stand up and remind the Council that we have an obligation to call out malign and destabilizing behaviour whenever and wherever we see it. Iran cannot violate Security Council sanctions with impunity. The Council must hold accountable those that, like Iran, violate sanctions, and ensure that Iranian military technologies, ballistic missiles, waterborne improvised explosive devices, sea mines, military unmanned aerial vehicles and other weaponry are prevented from reaching designated individuals and entities in Yemen.

Doing more to address the severe humanitarian needs of the Yemeni people, while taking measures to prevent the free flow of weaponry into Yemen, is essential to paving the way for the political solution that we all agree is necessary. We need to see genuine engagement from the parties, and we are prepared to support all efforts to that end. In that regard, we look forward to working with the newly appointed Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Martin Griffiths, and hope that we will see real progress in 2018 towards a lasting and peaceful solution to the conflict in Yemen.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed and Mr. John Ging for their briefings, and we commend Mr. Ahmed for his work in his post and his contribution, as well as his efforts to reach a settlement to the conflict in Yemen. We also want to thank the Permanent Representative of Peru for his work as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014).

We felt it was important that yesterday we succeeded in extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen in a largely technical and apolitical manner. That has helped us preserve a window of opportunity for further non-confrontational cooperation with the aim of making progress towards a settlement in Yemen. The Yemeni conflict is exceedingly difficult and complicated. We must find ways to launch the peace process without preconditions rather than looking for scapegoats and creating the results desired for geopolitical agendas.

We listened attentively Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed's analysis of recent events in Yemen, leaving us a singular historical legacy of the attempts to establish a political process. We hope the new Special Envoy will draw the requisite conclusions from the work that has already been done. We are obliged to conclude that so far we have been unable to get an effective process going. At the same time, the situation on the ground, particularly on the humanitarian front, has all the appearances of a disaster. The official statistics from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs suggest that 22 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, although in reality things are far worse. Millions of Yemenis are starving. The country is in the grip of cholera and diphtheria epidemics. The estimated numbers of casualties of the conflict are more than 9,000 dead and 52,000 wounded. Some 1.5 million Yemeni civil servants in the north and south have not been paid for more than a year and a half.

We see and note the fact that a great deal is being done to improve the humanitarian situation. We commend the efforts of the United Nations, as well as the individual contributions of a host of Member States, including Yemen's closest neighbours, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. However, the characteristics of such regional conflicts lead us to believe that

humanitarian assistance alone cannot deliver viable long-term solutions. It is essential to immediately shift the current situation onto a track leading to political dialogue. In this critical situation, it will be important for the United Nations to have a clear plan for further action. Martin Griffiths, the new Special Envoy, will have a key role to play in that, and we wish him every success. We hope that in his consultations with all the parties to the conflict he can come up with a plan of action and present it to the Council in his next report.

**Mr. Inchauste Jordán** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, for his briefing. We thank and commend him for his hard work. We would also like to affirm our support to the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, whose task will be focused on bringing together the parties and reaching a political solution to the conflict. I would also like to thank Mr. John Ging for his detailed briefing on this critical situation.

We are once again driven to lament the fact that, despite the Security Council's repeated calls to the parties to resume a political dialogue, as well as the tireless efforts of the international community to mitigate the severe humanitarian crisis that is overwhelming Yemen, we are again witnessing a dangerous escalation in armed clashes, with a high humanitarian cost. It is deeply regrettable that the presidential statement (S/PRST/2017/7) adopted on 15 June 2017 by the Security Council, which calls on the parties to commit to guaranteeing immediate and unrestricted access for humanitarian assistance, agreeing to a ceasefire and initiating dialogue with a view to reaching a political solution to the conflict, has been completely ignored and violated by the parties. There is evidence for that in the alarming increase in violence in Hudaydah governorate, which has caused the displacement of more than 14,000 families since the beginning of this year, now unfortunately added to the more than 85,000 people who have been forced to leave their homes since December 2017, leading to a total of more than 2 million internally displaced persons today.

Furthermore, the reports from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs say that the road that links the people of Al-Jarrahi and Hays in Hudaydah governorate is blocked, and other reports state that anti-personnel mines may have been planted along it. That situation constitutes an imminent threat to the civilian population travelling along it or using it to flee the clashes, as well as to convoys delivering humanitarian assistance that rely on it.

The worrying increase in bellicose language and activities have created a highly precarious situation in Yemen, putting more than three fourths of the population in need of urgent humanitarian assistance just to survive. It is essential to ensure and to facilitate access for, and the free movement of, cooperation and humanitarian aid agencies to provide the assistance and medical care needed to deal with the outbreak of cholera in 22 of the 23 governorates, which, according to the briefing that we have just received, has infected more than 1 million people and caused more than 2,200 deaths. In addition to that, there is the dangerous spread of diphtheria, which, according to the World Health Organization report of 10 February of this year, has led to more than 1,000 suspected cases and 64 deaths linked to the disease.

In that context, we are concerned about the reports of the precarious situation in which health-care centres must operate, such as the Hays hospital, the main health-care centre of Hudaydah governorate, which has not functioned since 10 December, when it was seriously damaged by aerial bombardments.

Bolivia echoes the statement of the Secretary-General on 3 December calling on the parties to restore access to all ports and to re-establish the entry of the imports on which the lives of 22 million people, who urgently need some kind of humanitarian assistance, depend. The Security Council must be clear when calling on all parties to ensure the full and continuous operation of all ports, airports and their access roads, in particular to Hudaydah and Saleef seaports and Sana'a airport. The parties must also be urged to comply with the provisions of resolution 2216 (2015).

For all those reasons, we reiterate our call for the Council to maintain a unanimous and firm stance in condemning the belligerent acts and campaigns that exacerbate the crisis in Yemen and give rise to a dangerous instability that threatens the lives of the 27 million innocent people living in the country. We call on the States and international actors with influence on the parties and stakeholders involved to exercise their good offices to prevent the crisis from becoming the greatest failure of the Organization since its establishment.

**Ms. Wronecka** (Poland): I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Yemen, for his comprehensive briefing and his efforts in supporting Yemen's return to a peaceful political transition. I appreciate the very objective briefing by Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Allow me to share our observations.

Poland is deeply concerned about the continuing deterioration of the disastrous humanitarian situation in Yemen, where a record number of 22 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance. Swift and decisive actions are required in order to put an end to the worst man-made humanitarian disaster. The continued flow of food, fuel and medical supplies must be guaranteed and the continuity of imports must be ensured. To that end, it is paramount that all Yemeni ports remain permanently open to both humanitarian and commercial shipments. We therefore urge all actors to comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian law and to end administrative obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian and commercial goods.

Poland welcomes the United Nations 2018 humanitarian response plan for Yemen, as well as the pledge by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to support humanitarian action in Yemen. We call for the quick implementation of that initiative in order to improve the living conditions of the Yemeni people.

We are gravely alarmed by the recent upsurge in violence in Yemen, especially in Taiz and Hudaydah governorates, which has resulted in an increase in civilian casualties and the further displacement of thousands of Yemeni citizens, who have been forced to flee their homes. We call on all parties to cease attacks against civilians as well as the indiscriminate use of weapons in populated areas, which continues to exacerbate the humanitarian situation. Under international humanitarian law, all parties are obliged to ensure the protection of civilians. Furthermore, we would like to stress the need for a firm and swift response to deal with all violations of human rights in Yemen committed by any party involved in the conflict. We consider any such action to be a clear violation of international law.

We strongly believe that there will be no significant improvement in the security and humanitarian situation in Yemen until a long-term political solution to the conflict is reached. We therefore strongly support the resumption of the United Nations-facilitated intra-Yemeni inclusive political process with the full participation of all relevant parties and stakeholders, as well as all sectors of Yemeni society, including women and young people.

We look forward to the assumption by Mr. Martin Griffiths of his post as the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Yemen. We call on all parties to engage constructively with him in good faith and without preconditions. We also call on the parties to agree on the modalities for a durable cessation of hostilities.

**Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia): I wish to thank Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his briefing. We greatly appreciate his service and tireless efforts to bring about a diplomatic solution to the Yemeni crisis. He was entrusted with a very difficult, complex and challenging task. I would add that we believe that he did his utmost to discharge his responsibilities with courage and commitment. We also thank Director John Ging for his briefing, and we reiterate our appreciation to the United Nations and its humanitarian partners for their dedicated and selfless service to provide aid under the extremely difficult circumstances in Yemen. We appreciate the update that we received.

The multifaceted crisis in Yemen continues to be a source of grave concern. After three years of devastating war, it is deeply worrying that, as a State, Yemen has all but ceased to exist, as the Panel of Experts on Yemen stated in its final report (see S/2018/68). That is something that one finds very painful and that leaves one numb — a State virtually disappearing when it would have been possible to prevent it. Perhaps it is not too late, and we believe that it is not. The claim that the State has all but ceased to exist may be a slight exaggeration.

All the same, the escalation of military activities continues unabated, claiming the lives of civilians and resulting in the destruction of civilian facilities. The territorial integrity of Yemen is yet to have an effective custodian. Furthermore, it is deeply disturbing that there is not any progress towards a peaceful political settlement of the conflict. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant have not hesitated to exploit the crisis, continuing their attacks, including the most recent suicide bomb attacks

on Saturday, with the ultimate goal of acquiring and governing territory.

We are concerned that that is threatening the security of the region and beyond, including the Horn of Africa. The deep-rooted and multifaceted crisis in Yemen demands an urgent and comprehensive political solution that addresses both the suffering of Yemenis as well as the concerns of the countries of the region. Given the catastrophic situation in Yemen and its spillover effects in the region and beyond, we stress the primacy of diplomacy in order to find durable political solutions, while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yemen. We therefore reiterate our position that the Yemeni crisis can be resolved only through a comprehensive political solution. We support the diplomatic efforts of the United Nations, and we urge the parties to cease hostilities and resume political talks under the auspices of the United Nations. In that regard, we welcome the appointment of Mr. Martin Griffiths as the new Special Envoy. We call on all parties to seize this opportunity to engage with the newly appointed Special Envoy to reinvigorate the political process.

As Director Ging stated, we are also deeply concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian crisis. The country is on the verge of famine. The devastating conflict has turned Yemen into the worst humanitarian crisis of our time wherein we have witnessed one of the worst cholera outbreaks in recent times. The economic crisis is worsening with the likelihood of the collapse of the Yemeni banking and financial system. Public services, including the health and educational systems, are collapsing. In addition, access to the effective delivery of humanitarian and commercial supplies remains a major challenge.

It is not necessary to say more concerning the painful challenge than what Director Ging has already said, for which we are grateful to him. The international community should continue to support the humanitarian work of the United Nations and its partners in a coordinated manner. In that regard, we encourage donors to extend their generous support in financing the 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan, which requires $2.96 billion. Accordingly, we hope that the 2018 pledging conference to be held in Geneva in April will be successful. Furthermore, to provide life-saving aid to all Yemenis who are facing unprecedented needs, regular, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access is critical. The protection of civilians and civilian facilities also remains imperative.

Lastly, we hope that the Council will reach a consensus on the draft Yemeni presidential statement, which, we believe, would send a unified message in support for the people of Yemen at this very critical time, but this is a man-made humanitarian tragedy, as has already been said. A quick resolution will be possible if there is a political will on the part of all. We are hopeful that the latter will be forthcoming before all is lost.

**Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the holding of this meeting on Yemen, which allows the Security Council once again to discuss the serious crisis that has been raging in the country over the past several years.

First of all, my country thanks Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for their excellent briefings, as well as Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, in his capacity as Chair of the Sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) for the work that he is doing.

I will centre my statement on two points: the political process and the humanitarian situation in Yemen. As we can see, the political process in Yemen is currently at an impasse that has been the source of concern and a call to action for the entire international community for more than a year. The parties to the conflict continue to clash, and the prospects for a political settlement are becoming increasingly remote, thereby running the risk that Yemen will become a failed State, to the detriment of its people, who ask only to live in peace and in the pursuit of happiness, like other peoples throughout the world. Concerning that escalation, which is jeopardizing the stability of the entire region, Côte d'Ivoire calls on all parties to reach an immediate cessation of hostilities and commit in a meaningful way to a political settlement of the crisis.

It is up to the Yemeni parties to realize the tragedy that their country is undergoing and take ownership of the political process through an inclusive and sincere dialogue, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, with a view to peacefully resolving the crisis. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire commends the work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Yemen in the framework of consultations with the Yemeni parties, aimed at giving

new impetus to the political dialogue in that country. Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the commitment of the parties to the conflict to taking part in the forthcoming peace talks in Muscat, and urges them to participate meaningfully and in good faith in those talks.

Côte d'Ivoire also remains concerned about the deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Indeed, with more than 22 million people in need of emergency humanitarian assistance, the situation in the country appears to be one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world, and the number of internally displaced persons continues to rise. We are being told that approximately 2 million children — and, I might add, women — are suffering from malnutrition. The dramatic worsening of the humanitarian situation is a direct result of the political, security and economic instability that Yemen has experienced for more than three years. Côte d'Ivoire calls on the parties to the conflict to reach a ceasefire that would ensure the unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions.

My country urges the international community to take appropriate measures to prevent the further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Côte d'Ivoire accordingly welcomes the reopening by the Arab coalition of the various ports, thereby allowing for the delivery of food and enabling all forms of humanitarian activity. My country requests that the coalition do more insofar as it remains possible. Moreover, the Ivorian delegation also welcomes the United Nations launch of the Yemen 2018 humanitarian response plan, to which the generous contributions of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are to be commended, and calls on other donors to contribute to funding the programme so as to meet the needs of the Yemeni people.

Concerning violations and abuses committed by the parties to the conflict, the gravity of which the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General underscored earlier, my country calls for an immediate halt to such violations and urges the parties present to facilitate the mission of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen, established by the United Nations Human Rights Council in September 2017 under the provisions of international humanitarian law.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire thanks Special Envoy of the Secretary General Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed for his tireless efforts to resolve the crisis in Yemen and commends him for the outstanding work that he has been able to accomplish. At the same time, it welcomes the appointment of the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, to whom it wishes him every success in the accomplishment of his mission and assures him of its full cooperation.

In order for all the good we wish for Yemen to occur, the Council will have to work as one with a single objective in mind: to put an end to the conflict in that country.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We wish to begin our statement by welcoming and paying special tribute to the efforts of Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, who has performed his role with great responsibility, prudence and perseverance in extremely difficult circumstances. We also thank Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for his precise yet broad overview of the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

Peru is dismayed by the humanitarian situation in Yemen and considers it urgent to reach an inclusive political solution to the conflict. After more than three years of violence and pain, in which none of the warring parties has achieved military or territorial gains, it is clear that there is no military solution. We therefore consider it essential that the new Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, be able to count on the strong support of the Security Council and on the assistance required for the complex task of re-establishing dialogue among all parties involved so as to resolve the conflict. That will require a major coordination effort between the Council and those countries with the capacity to influence the warring parties, based on a cautious and balanced approach to developments in Yemen. In that spirit, we strongly condemn the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Yemen attributable to the various actors involved in the conflict. These must be properly investigated, and those responsible must not go unpunished.

It is imperative that the Council remain united and consistent in assuming its responsibility to protect civilian populations in all humanitarian crises, wherever they occur, in line with international law and international humanitarian law. In this regard, we must ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches the more

than 22 million Yemenis who need it. The humanitarian crisis must be addressed immediately, in parallel with and independently of the political process, which implies the permanent opening of ports, especially Al-Hudeydah, as Yemen is a country completely dependent on the importation of food, medicine and other goods, as well as the opening of Sana'a airport for commercial flights and emergency medical evacuations, among other urgent measures. It also calls for the cessation of all barriers to assistance, threats to humanitarian workers in the course of their work, and the establishment of conditions that seek to impose the place and manner in which aid is distributed. We hope that these points and others relating to the humanitarian field will be agreed upon in the presidential declaration which is currently being negotiated and which we hope to adopt as soon as possible.

We would like to express our support for the United Nations 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan, and welcome the announcements of significant contributions from members of the coalition, in particular Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which are expected to be channelled through the response plan, as well as other donors. We also welcome the renewal of Yemen's sanctions regime, whose 2140 Committee we have the honour to chair. We therefore believe that it is important to deter and restrict the ability of individuals or entities that threaten peace, security and stability and to contribute to the achievement of a political solution in Yemen.

**Mr. Umarov** (Kazakhstan): We would like to join others in thanking Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmed, and Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Mr. John Ging, for their updates.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the committed efforts of OCHA and other humanitarian organizations aimed at easing the suffering of Yemeni people in such difficult and challenging circumstances. Since this is Ismail's last briefing, my delegation wishes to sincerely thank for him for his dedication to his work and for his contributions to finding a way to resolve the protracted crisis in Yemen. We wish him every success in his future endeavours. We welcome the appointment of the incoming Special Envoy, Mr. Martin Griffiths, and stand ready to extend our full support to him and his mission.

We are alarmed by the continued dire humanitarian situation in Yemen. It is necessary to increase the humanitarian response and provide unhindered access to all areas of the country, in compliance with the rules of international humanitarian law. We therefore welcome the decision of the coalition to keep all Yemeni ground, air and sea ports open, in order to allow the flow of supplies in and out of the country. In such critical conditions, it is important that the United Nations engage with all interested parties to have a clear plan for further action to ease the humanitarian situation and reach a comprehensive political settlement.

We welcome the United Nations 2018 Yemen humanitarian response plan, which requires $2.96 billion to assist more than 13 million people. We express our appreciation to the Governments of Sweden and Switzerland, together with the United Nations to host a pledging conference for Yemen in Geneva in April. We also express our appreciation for the pledge made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to contribute nearly $1 billion to the United Nations response plan and their commitments to raising an additional $500 million from others donors in the region. We welcome the delivery, with the help of the United States, of four World Food Programme cranes to Al-Hudaydah, as well as plans to install four additional cranes in other ports.

Humanitarian aid may provide a temporary solution but can never compensate for the absence of a fully and adequately functioning Government. Efforts are therefore necessary to settle the intra-Yemeni tensions. To avoid further deterioration, all sides must demonstrate sincerity and flexibility so as to adequately resolve the complex issues of withdrawal of forces, disarmament and the formation of a Government of National Unity. We are confident that only a political settlement will be able to end this human-made crisis, and we call on all States that have influence on the parties to the conflict to make every effort to end the hostilities through inclusive and comprehensive dialogue and negotiations.

In conclusion, we welcome the adoption of resolution 2402 (2018) yesterday (see S/PV.8190), which renewed the sanctions regime until 26 February 2019 and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 28 March 2019, in order to allow the Council and the international community to work further on the conflict.

**Mr. Shen Bo** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to thank Special Envoy Ismail Ould Sheikh Ahmed and Director John Ging for their briefings. I wish especially to thank Special Envoy Ahmed for the unrelenting efforts he has made over the past three years to facilitate the political process in Yemen. He has been fulfilling a daunting task in difficult circumstances and his efforts have been apparent to everyone. We note our highest regard for him and wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The situation in Yemen further deteriorated of late. The political process is stalled, military conflict continues, and the humanitarian crisis has deepened. China finds the current situation disturbing and calls on the international community to step up mediation efforts, encourage the parties to agree on a ceasefire, return to the political track and achieve peace, security and stability at an early date.

China welcomed the Council's unanimous adoption yesterday of resolution 2402 (2018), renewing the mandate of the Yemen sanctions regime and its Panel of Experts for another year, which should facilitate the international community's efforts to promote peace, and which is consonant with the interests of Yemen and the other countries of the region. China has consistently held an objective and impartial position on Yemen, with no self-interested motives. We support Yemen's unity, sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, and we believe that a political settlement is the only way for it to achieve lasting peace. We call on the parties to support the mediation efforts of the United Nations and — based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, and the outcome documents of the National Dialogue Conference — to find an inclusive solution as soon as possible through dialogue and negotiations.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Martin Griffiths as the new Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and hope that all the parties will support his mediation work and step up their efforts to promote peace talks. We urge them to break the political stalemate as soon as possible and to return to dialogue and negotiations to resolve their differences. The international community and the countries of the region should provide constructive assistance in that regard.

China has noted the gravity of the humanitarian situation in Yemen. With the ongoing cholera outbreak and millions of Yemenis facing the imminent threat of a serious famine, we fear for the country's suffering people. The international community should increase its humanitarian assistance with a view to alleviating the suffering on the ground. We will continue to provide the Yemeni people with aid to the extent we are able, through both bilateral and multilateral channels. Ensuring unhindered access for humanitarian assistance will be crucial to alleviating the situation on the ground. The parties concerned should make concerted efforts to provide safe, secure and unhindered humanitarian access in order to help create the conditions needed to ease the humanitarian situation on the ground.

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to begin this statement by thanking the Secretary-General for his report, which we were briefed on this morning by Special Envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who for almost three years has spared no effort in working to find a solution to the serious and devastating crisis in Yemen. We thank and commend him for his noble work. He is leaving his job with his head held high, after working diligently to fulfil the task he was entrusted with. We also thank Mr. John Ging for his similarly informative briefing as Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Both his and Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed's reports described an extremely serious situation on the humanitarian, political and social fronts.

Equatorial Guinea is very grateful to you, Mr. President, for your excellent stewardship of the Council and for ensuring that the Council's work has been carried out to everyone's satisfaction, one tangible proof of which was yesterday's adoption of resolution 2402 (2018), one of the two resolutions we adopted yesterday, which will ensure continued dialogue between all the active political forces in Yemen, in accordance with previous Council resolutions. We firmly believe that the new resolution will make it possible for the international community to achieve its objectives in the tragic political and humanitarian situation that Yemen is currently enduring.

In our view, it is the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the maintenance of international peace and security — which is the chief task of the Security Council — that we must take into account if we are to achieve the purposes and objectives of today's resolution, with the aim of resolving the current chaotic situation in Yemen in the areas of peace and

security, humanitarian issues and sustainable human development in its broadest sense. It is urgent that we take action with the support of the international community and in accordance with Security Council rules, in order to provide an appropriate and sustainable response to the conflict in Yemen, which is likely to continue doing enormous material and human damage to its people.

We have seen from the most recent report of the Panel of Experts (S/2018/68) that the humanitarian situation in Yemen is devastating, and that is why we hope that with the adoption of the resolution submitted by the Russian Federation yesterday, we can achieve the satisfactory outcome so long desired by every member of the Council, since the continuing current situation only encourages the terrorist groups that have sprung up all over the country. We call on Yemen and its allies to comply with the resolution with a view to ending the country's humanitarian crisis and alleviating the economic, social and cultural problems facing the people of Yemen. We commend Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for their significant support in that regard.

Lastly, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea urges Member States to comply strictly with the arms embargo outlined in resolution 2216 (2015) and to refrain from creating obstacles to Yemen's access to humanitarian assistance, where more than 20 million people are suffering from critical deprivation. In conclusion, we call on the parties involved in the conflict to resume the political process with a view to alleviating the humanitarian crisis and the war's severely damaging impact on the civilian population, as described in today's briefings.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Kuwait.

I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and Mr. John Ging, Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings this morning.

The recent developments on the security and political fronts in Yemen are very worrying and have exacerbated the situation and the stalemate in the political process, which is the result of the clear obstinacy of one of the parties to the conflict, the Houthis, who have refused to engage with the United Nations efforts to end the crisis or even to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The State of Kuwait reaffirms the fact that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Yemen. The only way to settle the conflict is through dialogue and a political solution that must be based on the three reference points agreed on — the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome document of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 2216 (2015), which is one of the basic pillars for resolving the crisis in Yemen.

Historically, Kuwait has worked since the 1970s as a mediator to bring its brothers in Yemen closer together. In 2016, Kuwait spent more than 100 days hosting peace talks between the Yemeni parties under the auspices of the United Nations, in an effort to achieve a peaceful settlement to the conflict, based on the three reference points that constituted a road map. We made those efforts because we hope to see the brotherly nation of Yemen enjoy stability and to prevent bloodshed among its people. Everybody, including the parties to the conflict, considered the peace talks that took place in Kuwait a historic opportunity for our brothers in Yemen to bring an end to the conflict.

There is another aspect of the crisis that should the Security Council should focus on. We all know about the Houthis' firing of ballistic missiles at our brother country Saudi Arabia.

By 5 February, 95 missiles had already been launched against Saudi Arabia. Kuwait condemns in the strongest terms the launching of ballistic missiles by the Houthis against Saudi Arabia, as well as their alleged attacks on the United Arab Emirates. This is a dangerous development that threatens regional peace and security, challenges the will of the international community and undermines efforts to reach the aspired political solution to the crisis. We also affirm Kuwait's full support for our brothers in Saudi Arabia and for all the measures taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to safeguard its security and stability. In that context, we underscore that the Security Council cannot accept a non-State actor threatening a sovereign State by launching missiles that endanger the stability and security of the region. Those rocket attacks must be condemned every time they occur.

The security of seaways is also important and we cannot be complacent in dealing with them. A clear message must be sent that attacking or threatening to attack vessels or mining the Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea is absolutely unacceptable. This must be condemned as well.

At the humanitarian level, it is important for us to do more to alleviate humanitarian conditions for the people of Yemen. In Kuwait, we are well aware of that humanitarian aspect. We participated in the donor's conference held in Geneva in April 2017, where we committed to providing approximately $100 million in humanitarian assistance. Countries of the coalition to restore legitimacy in Yemen are continuing to make efforts to reduce the suffering of the Yemeni people. On 22 January, the coalition announced a comprehensive plan of humanitarian operations in Yemen, which was hailed by Secretary-General Guterres and Under-Secretary-General Lowcock. The plan includes a generous contribution from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates amounting to $1 billion in humanitarian aid, amounting to nearly one-third of the entire 2018 United Nations appeal for assistance in Yemen. We hope that the coalition will be able to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground by the end of 2018.

In conclusion, and since this is the last briefing of Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, I wish to express our gratitude for the work he and his team have done over almost three years since he started working to resolve the Yemeni crisis. In Kuwait, we have closely witnessed the efforts he has made in the peace talks. We hope to be able to work with our new Special Envoy, Mr. Griffiths. We pledge our full support for him in carrying out his duties.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

**Mr. Alyemany** (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month as it draws to a close. I commend your wise stewardship of the Council's proceedings and thank you kindly for giving us the opportunity to speak before the Council. Moreover, I would be remiss if I did not convey our most heartfelt congratulations and salutations to the brotherly people of Kuwait on the occasion of their national day.

I would like to express our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Yemen, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. We thank him for the great efforts he has made throughout his tenure of almost three years with a view to resolving the Yemeni crisis that was created by the Houthi coup in Yemen. The coup has destroyed Yemen's capacities and has set it back hundreds of years.

I also take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of Yemen, to welcome the Secretary-General's decision to appoint Mr. Martin Griffiths as the new Special Envoy for Yemen. We look forward to working with him in the same constructive spirit and flexibility that we have shown thus far, in order to reach a lasting peace in my country, Yemen, that would put an end to the state of absolute annihilation and to the war that the Houthis have been waging against our people since September 2014.

On 16 February, and upon the instructions of my Government, I sent a letter to the Secretary-General in which I noted the important and sensitive historic moment that coincides with his appointment of a new Envoy. In that letter, I expressed the readiness of our Government to work with him in accordance with the terms of reference agreed upon by the Yemeni people, which have enjoyed the support of the international community. Those terms of reference are the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcome of the comprehensive national dialogue that was supervised by the United Nations throughout 2013 and resulted in a reconciliation document reflecting the aspirations of all factions of Yemeni society. It is also in line with the relevant Council resolutions pertaining to Yemen, especially resolution 2216 (2015), which lays the necessary groundwork for resolving the conflict in Yemen and is a reflection of the Council's understanding of the fundamentals of the problem in Yemen.

As the members of the Council understand, no sovereign State can accept the presence of armed militias like the Iranian Hizbullah within its territory, controlling part of it and using violence and heavy weaponry to hijack the State and forcefully impose their own agenda. Moreover, they are attacking neighbouring States by firing Iranian-made ballistic missiles, recruiting children, destroying cities and displacing

their population, in clear violation of international, humanitarian and human rights law.

We beseech the Security Council — which has been unified and clear-sighted in its position since the beginning of its engagement in the Yemeni crisis in 2011 — and Mr. Martin Griffiths to make it their mission to ensure the Houthis' compliance with Council resolutions in order to prevent them from benefitting from their crimes against humanity. If the Council and Mr. Griffiths succeed in that effort, armed militias would no longer be encouraged to continue their attacks on legitimate entities, and from spreading terrorism and chaos.

Peace cannot be achieved in my country without the exit of the Houthi militias from the cities and State institutions that they have occupied and pillaged. They must return the weaponry that they stole from the military and security State institutions, especially the ballistic missiles that have been provided to them by Iran. They must end their aggression against neighbouring States and stop carrying out the functions of the State. They must stop committing the gravest violations of international law — the recruitment of children. That is the only way to ensure lasting peace.

I have repeatedly underscored in the Council that the Houthis cannot be reasoned with. They will not abide by international law, humanitarian law or human rights law. Like the gangs of Da'esh and AlQaida, their mentality is not bound by legal or historical frameworks. They will not accept any sustainable peace that would restore State authority to Yemen. The Houthis are working — and this is publicly stated by their masters in Tehran — to destabilize not just Yemen, but the entire region in order to uphold Iran's expansionist agenda. They only understand the language of violence and they see, in the hesitation and leniency of the international position, an opportunity to pursue their expansionist aggressive plot. The Special Envoy has just said that the Houthis are not willing at this stage — and I say at any stage — to offer security concessions or to engage in formulating the details of a comprehensive security plan. This is the basic dilemma for a comprehensive solution. In Kuwait, they refused to sign a full and comprehensive proposal based on Tehran's instructions.

Yesterday, the Council failed to send a clear message to Iran, which will serve only to encourage that country and its terrorists in the region, including Houthi militias in Yemen, to continue along their path. The ambiguous messages conveyed by the Council yesterday will lead to increased levels of violence, ballistic missiles and further tragedy on the ground. I would like to thank the States that voted in favour of yesterday's draft resolution S/2018/156, submitted by the United Kingdom. The fact that Iran is in a state of non-compliance with paragraph 14 of resolution 2216 (2015), as concluded by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), is simply clear proof of its policy to destabilize the entire region. Moreover, the launch of 95 Iranian-made ballistic missiles carried out by Houthi militias against the territories of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as mentioned in the report published by the Panel of Experts on Yemen (S/2018/68), are proof of an international terrorist plot masterminded by Iran — a rogue State that sponsors international terrorism and continues to spend billions of dollars to support terrorist organizations in the region, including the Houthis in Yemen, while its own people suffer a shortage of basic supplies.

The unprecedented humanitarian suffering in Yemen continues and worsens day by day in the twenty-first century. The systematic destruction of all official State institutions, private and public property and houses of worship; and the intimidation, terrorization and humiliation of unarmed civilians; and the recruitment of children sent to die on the front lines have occurred in all parts of Yemen territories controlled by coup forces. Citizens starve while the black market thrives. Our people's capabilities being eroded in broad daylight. These are all violations of international law, values and human norms. In his briefing, Mr. John Ging mentioned that the Houthis disrupt the delivery of humanitarian aid every day.

The 2017 annual report submitted by the Panel of Experts cites staggering statistics of the theft of public funds and the illegal accumulation of wealth by Houthi militias, which have stolen more than $5 billion since they occupied the Yemeni capital of Sana'a. They continue to plunder the revenue of local industries, including tax revenue and that of the Al-Hudaydah and Salif seaports, not to mention the funds derived from dual taxation imposed on the citizens, and the sale of oil products on the black market. The report indicates that all Yemeni companies that import oil products are newly established and associated with Houthi militias. Moreover, the Panel estimates that $6.75 billion has been stolen over the past three years. Coup forces continue to

starve our people in areas under their control and refuse to pay civil servants or cooperate with the international community and the Office of the Special Envoy. They have stated that if the international community wants civil servants to be paid, it should provide the funds.

Humanitarian suffering has reached appalling levels. This year the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has estimated its humanitarian response plan for Yemen will require nearly $3 billion. Coalition States led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have pledged and donated $1.5 billion, for which we are very grateful. We commend the comprehensive humanitarian plan launched by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, which includes all relief sectors, economic relief and recovery efforts on the road to reconstruction. I call on all members of the Council and the States Members of the United Nations to quickly make pledges to cover the requirements of this year's humanitarian response plan for Yemen.

The Houthi militias use the humanitarian crisis of the Yemeni people as a shield, and to advance their own political agenda. They pretend to be victims and blackmail the international community. I have repeatedly warned that some in the Security Council view the Yemeni issue simply as a matter of providing humanitarian relief in the absence of a political solution. The international community's inability to pressure the Houthis to come to the negotiating table and implement the requirements of resolution 2216 (2015) will prolong the war and the crisis in Yemen. The money that countries may donate will not be enough to save the 27 million Yemenis facing disaster in the diaspora or in their own country, which is being destroyed by the Houthis in a vengeful and vindictive manner. Yemen is one of the wealthiest and most beautiful lands in the world. Anyone who has visited can attest to that. I call upon the Council to put pressure on the coup forces that reject peace efforts, and hold them accountable before the entire world.

In conclusion, the people of Yemen beseech the members of the Council to stand by them at this historic and crucial time, as they have done since the start of the political transition crisis in 2011. Our people, with their glorious past and generous spirit, stand before the Council and call on its humanity to stop this war and end the coup. Our people cannot be left begging for crumbs at the table. Millions of Yemeni youth cannot be left to drown in a sea of despair or wander in foreign lands in an attempt to escape the clutches of the Houthis, Al-Qaida and Da'esh terrorist gangs.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.8192

# Security Council

Seventy-third year

*Provisional*

**8192**nd meeting

Tuesday, 27 February 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

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|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Alotaibi | (Kuwait) |
| *Members:* | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mr. Inchauste Jordán |
| | China | Mr. Wu Haitao |
| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue |
| | Equatorial Guinea | Mr. Ndong Mba |
| | Ethiopia | Mr. Alemu |
| | France | Mrs. Gueguen |
| | Kazakhstan | Mr. Temenov |
| | Netherlands | Mr. Van Oosterom |
| | Peru | Mr. Meza-Cuadra |
| | Poland | Ms. Wronecka |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Polyanskiy |
| | Sweden | Mr. Orrenius Skau |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Clay |
| | United States of America | Ms. French |

## Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Special report of the Secretary-General on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (S/2018/143)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan**

**Special report of the Secretary-General on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (S/2018/143)**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of South Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; and His Excellency Mr. Ismail Wais, Intergovernmental Authority on Development Special Envoy for South Sudan.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/143, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Ms. Keita.

**Ms. Keita**: Mr. President, I thank you for the opportunity to brief the Security Council. Special Envoys Wais and Haysom as well as Special Representative of the Secretary-General Shearer will brief on the peace process and the situation on the ground, respectively. I will thus focus my remarks on the special report of the Secretary-General on the review and renewal of the mandate of United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (S/2018/143).

In line with the Secretary-General's agenda for reforming the peace and security pillar, the Secretary-General directed the Under-Secretaries-General for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Field Support (DFS) to undertake independent reviews of eight major peacekeeping operations. The independent review of UNMISS was conducted from November 2017 to January 2018 by an integrated team that included representatives of DPKO and DFS, as well as agencies, funds and programmes, and was led by an independent expert, Mr. Kevin Kennedy, former Under-Secretary-General for the United Nations Department of Safety and Security. The team initially undertook a conflict analysis and consultations at United Nations Headquarters before proceeding to South Sudan, where it received detailed briefings and held extensive consultations with UNMISS and the United Nations country team, the Transitional Government of National Unity, the diplomatic community and non-governmental organizations. The team also visited Addis Ababa and engaged with regional partners and opposition figures. The special report therefore comprises the main findings of the review team and the observations and recommendations of the Secretary-General, to feed into deliberations on the renewal of the UNMISS mandate.

UNMISS was established in 2011 as a capacity-building tool to assist a Government that lacked the capability to deliver services to its people. However, following the December 2013 outbreak of violence, UNMISS evolved into a Mission in which the protection of civilians, including from national security institutions, has become the main focus. This requirement unfortunately remains valid. The situation in South Sudan continues to remain a cause for grave concern for everyone. Tens of thousands of civilians are estimated to have been killed since the conflict began in December 2013. More than 4 million have been displaced, half of whom are now refugees in neighbouring countries.

As documented once again by the Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry, which published its report last Friday, human rights violations and abuses, including horrific incidents of sexual violence, have reached alarming levels, and impunity for these crimes remains the norm. Moreover, more than 200,000 internally displaced persons continue to be protected on UNMISS bases, with the assistance of humanitarian partners.

Since May 2017, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), supported by the African Union and the United Nations, has been working to revive the political process. A high-level revitalization forum on the peace agreement was convened on 18 December 2017 and delivered a new Cessation of Hostilities Agreement on 21 December. Since the new Agreement came into force on 24 December 2017, it has been breached repeatedly by the parties in various

parts of the country. Special Envoys Wais and Haysom will brief the Council on the progress made during the second phase of the revitalization forum, but let me just echo here the message of the African Union Peace and Security Council, as expressed in its most recent communiqué, dated 8 February. If violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and attacks against civilians are to end, we need to ensure that the signatories are held accountable and also deprived of the means to continue fighting. Without criminal accountability for the crimes committed and an end to the supply of weapons and ammunitions to the warring parties, the suffering of the South Sudanese populations is unlikely to end.

Meanwhile, we need to be aware that the economic situation in South Sudan is also expected to continue deteriorating. The army and security agencies have not received salaries for several months. Criminality is increasing and adding to the prevailing insecurity. Civil servant arrears are accumulating and many public-sector employees are no longer reporting to work. South Sudan is ranked 181 of 188 countries on the Human Development Index. The survival of the population will therefore require massive levels of international assistance for the foreseeable future.

The review found that the protection of civilians sites continue to dominate UNMISS protection of civilians activities. Managing and providing humanitarian assistance to those sites — a collective effort between the Mission and the humanitarian community — is a major and difficult undertaking. Some sites have become highly politicized, witnessing the activities of competing gangs and smuggling of goods — a level of criminality that is extremely difficult to manage with existing resources and without the cooperation of the Government, despite sustained efforts to improve security in its midst. The protection of civilians sites remain a continuing point of friction with the Government, which claims that it provides refuge to elements of the armed opposition and is refusing to investigate and prosecute crimes perpetrated on its premises. Despite UNMISS efforts, and in the absence of criminal prosecution, sexual and gender-based violence has become a serious problem at some of them, where approximately 80 per cent of the population is comprised of women and children.

The review found that largely over 50 per cent of the Mission's uniformed personnel are currently devoted to protecting those sites. While the vast majority of the people in the protection of civilians sites are there for their physical protection, and the protection of civilians sites will remain the responsibility of the Mission until the hosted population feel safe enough to leave them, those sites only represent a fraction of the South Sudanese civilians in need of protection. There are no easy answers to that dilemma. There will never be enough troops both to protect the protection of civilians sites and to extend the UNMISS protection footprint to other areas of large displacements in a country as large as South Sudan and with 2 million displaced. Increasing the effectiveness of protection efforts beyond the protection of civilians sites will need to continue being a major priority of the Mission, notably through the development of an integrated and people-focused, system-wide protection approach, aimed at filling existing gaps, generating synergies and removing duplication, and thus possible wastage of resources.

With respect to the Regional Protection Force (RPF), since resolution 2304 (2016) was adopted on 12 August 2016, the security conditions in the capital have changed substantially. Today, while the risk of instability and violence remains, the threat of military conflict in Juba has considerably diminished. The current environment in Juba therefore may call for some adjustment of the RPF mandate as currently scripted. Following the review, the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has ordered the conduct of a military and police capability study to explore how fewer troops can be dedicated to the protection of civilians sites and more deployed throughout the country to protect other civilians under imminent threats of violence. The capability study will also need to address the configuration of the RPF, as it is likely to have to support revised transitional security arrangements, to be agreed upon during the High-Level Revitalization Forum.

South Sudan came into being with extremely limited institutional capacity in all areas of governance and Government services, with the exception of military forces. That situation has not improved in subsequent years. Poor governance and economic collapse have compromised already weak rule-of-law institutions. In the current political and security environment, the review found that a full-scale return to capacity-building for rule-of-law institutions is not warranted. An increase in the training of national security institutions in international human rights and humanitarian law and support to the investigation and

prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence are, however, necessary, consistent with the requirements of the human rights due diligence policy. That should be undertaken with existing resources and in close collaboration with the United Nations country team to avoid a duplication of effort.

It is our considered judgment that the most effective way to protect civilians in a sustainable way is to reach a political solution to the conflict. A sustainable political resolution of the conflict is also the only avenue to chalk out a viable exit strategy for UNMISS. The four-pillared mandate of UNMISS remains valid, albeit with some adjustments, but the focus of the Council and the region should undoubtedly be on its fourth pillar, which is to support to the political process. Without progress in the political process, the Mission is likely to have to be deployed for a considerable amount of time, at a considerable cost to the international community. Moreover, in order for UNMISS to deliver on its mandate effectively, the Mission will need to gain unfettered freedom of movement and the full cooperation of the Government, both of which remain insufficient today.

I once again urge the Council to pronounce itself against the repeated violations of the Status of Forces Agreement, as well as the restrictions and impediments imposed on humanitarian partners. In addition, while the Mission has delivered satisfactorily on its task of creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the safety and security of aid workers remain a serious concern that the Government must address urgently. Ninety-two aid workers have so far been killed since the conflict began, and of those 25 were killed in 2017. The safety and security of people whose sole purpose is to provide assistance to the most vulnerable of South Sudanese should be a common cause for all in general, but for the Government in particular.

As communicated by UNMISS on 24 February, an allegation of sexual exploitation involving several police personnel belonging to a Ghanaian formed police unit in Wau was documented at the Wau protection of civilians site. In that respect, let me reaffirm that Headquarters and the UNMISS leadership are fully committed to implementing the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. As soon as the preliminary results of the investigation came through, the Mission took immediate action and removed the entire unit of 46 police officers from duty within the protection of civilians site and transported them to Juba. That was done to protect witnesses and victims.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services has already begun its investigation into the allegation and, in cooperation with the police-contributing country responsible, all efforts will be made to hold those found to have engaged in sexual exploitation or abuse accountable in line with the existing procedures. On the whole, the Ghanaian peacekeepers and police officers serving in UNMISS have made an excellent contribution to the protection of civilians and to the building of durable peace in South Sudan. It is very disappointing that the behaviour of some police officers risks staining that record of service as well as the Mission's reputation.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that only a political solution can bring an end to the conflict in South Sudan. There is no military solution. I would urge the Security Council, as well as the African Union and members of IGAD, to use all possible leverage on the parties to reach a viable political agreement so that the people of South Sudan can finally see the peace dividend that has eluded them since independence in 2011.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. Keita for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Wais.

**Mr. Wais**: First of all, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your able leadership of the work of the Security Council during this month.

It is with great pleasure that I brief the Security Council today on the status of the ongoing High-Level Revitalization Forum on the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The briefing is aimed at keeping the Council abreast of the status of implementation of the Revitalization Forum. It will include a review of the mandate of the Forum, the achievements attained during its recent phase, key observations and recommendations for the attention of the Security Council.

The Council will recall that since the July 2016 fighting in Juba, South Sudan, the political, economic and security situation in South Sudan has significantly changed. The emergent realities in the country's political landscape have impeded the effective implementation of the 2015 peace agreement. The Council will further

recall that, as a result, at its thirty-first Extraordinary Summit, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 12 June 2017, the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government decided that the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan should be urgently revitalized.

The stated objectives of the revitalization are threefold, namely, to restore the permanent ceasefire, to resume the full and inclusive implementation of the 2015 peace agreement, and to develop revised and realistic timelines and an implementation schedule towards a democratic election at the end of the transitional period.

At the launch of the Revitalization Forum, we sought to pursue the directives of the IGAD leaders highlighted above, including a review of the implementation and oversight mechanism for a revised peace agreement, as well as resource mobilization for its implementation. The latter are consequential issues pertaining to the effective implementation of the revitalized 2015 peace agreement.

IGAD successfully launched and concluded the first phase of the Revitalization Forum, which was convened from 18 to 22 December 2017. The parties deliberated and eventually signed the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access on 21 December 2017. As a follow-up, a workshop on the cessation of hostilities was convened in Addis Ababa from 24 to 25 January to assist the parties and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) with the requisite tools to implement the critical provisions of the Agreement. To that end, specific modalities that would enable the full implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities were developed.

The guiding principle of silencing the guns ahead of the commencement of the talks of the second phase was to establish the necessary conditions for the South Sudanese stakeholders to discuss substantive issues of the revitalization. It was also intended to contribute to confidence-building among the parties to the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, on the one hand, and the South Sudanese citizenry awaiting the return of peace to their beloved country, on the other hand.

The second phase of the Revitalization Forum was convened from 5 to 16 February at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa. Its main goal was to deliberate and to agree on ways to restore the permanent ceasefire, to resume the full implementation of the peace agreement, and to develop revised and realistic implementation schedules towards a democratic election at the end of the transitional period. In the course of the 11 days, however, the Forum focused on a declaration of principles and on revitalizing chapters I and II of the peace agreement, and achieved the following outcomes.

The parties constructively deliberated on a declaration of principles intended to guide the discussion on the revitalization of the 2015 peace agreement. The declaration of principles was signed by all the parties except the Transitional Government of National Unity. The parties also constructively deliberated and agreed on some provisions of governance during a new transitional period and on most of the provisions of the chapter on the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements. Where the parties achieved consensus on the provisions of chapters I and II of the 2015 peace agreement, the heads of delegation duly initialled those articles.

Although the majority of the issues on governance discussed within the specific articles were agreed upon, there were divergent views on the sharing of responsibilities in the revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, particularly in the executive, legislature and judiciary, including governance arrangements at the State level.

On the permanent ceasefire and transitional security arrangements, the parties agreed on several articles, including the permanent ceasefire, the composition and restructuring of the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism, and the new structure for the command and control of forces during the transitional period. However, the parties had significant differences on articles 5 and 7 regarding transitional security arrangements and the unification of forces, respectively. The opposition groups would like to see practical measures that guarantee their security if they return to Juba even if that security is provided by a third party.

Despite the facilitation's best efforts, in view of the divergent opinions put forward by the parties and the inability to achieve consensus on some articles, the facilitation suspended the adoption of the outstanding issues to allow the parties more time to consult and to re-evaluate their respective positons. The facilitation will continue to engage the parties bilaterally to ensure that they reach some realistic consensus sooner

rather than later. As for the pending provisions of the contentious articles, including on the sharing of responsibilities, the facilitation will present them for further deliberation and agreement in the next phase of the Forum.

On the status of adherence to the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Civilian Protection and Humanitarian Access, I regret to inform the Council that fighting incidents have continued to be reported in South Sudan, even as the second phase of the Revitalization Forum was ongoing. Worse still, those incidents disrupted the Forum for a day, as one of the parties protested the continued alleged violations of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities by walking away from the talks.

Related, provocative statements also continued to be made against the ceasefire monitoring body and its personnel. Those incidents are unacceptable and clearly demonstrate the lack of good will and compliance with the agreement by the individuals and parties involved in those violations. Although those incidents are being investigated by CTSAMM to identify violators, it is imperative that the Council, in cooperation with the region and the African Union Peace and Security Council, consider urgently needed and appropriate measures for holding accountable violators and spoilers of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement whose identity has been verified by CTSAMM. Such measures would be in line with and include the decision of the twenty-eighth Extraordinary Summit of IGAD Heads of State and Government of 7 November 2014, which clearly spelled out consequences for violating the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. The Council may recall the third IGAD Assembly resolution, which prescribes penalties for such violators. It states that:

> "Any violation of the cessation of the hostilities by any party will invite the following collective action by the IGAD region against those responsible for such violations, which will include, but are not limited to: (a) the enactment of asset freezes; (b) the enactment of travel bans within the region; and (c) [the] denial of the supply of arms and ammunition, and any other material that could be used in war."

I commend the Council for demonstrating its unwavering support to the ongoing revitalization process and for the strong statements that it has issued in the quest for sustainable peace in South Sudan. As I conclude, I would like to pose the following questions for the Council's consideration: How can the Council make non-compliance with the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and implementation of the revitalized peace agreement costly to the spoilers and violators; How can we guarantee the security of the opposition in Juba upon its return and the inclusive implementation of the peace agreement; and how can we avoid a repetition of the July 16 fighting in Juba? Those questions demand policy decisions that would prevent a relapse into armed conflict in South Sudan.

Lastly, I reiterate my appeal to the Council for its continuous support for both the region and the continent in ensuring that the Revitalization Forum process reaches a successful conclusion that restores peace and stability in the Republic of South Sudan.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Wais for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Ndong Mba** (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea expresses its gratitude to the presidency of the Security Council for convening this meeting and for the briefings we just heard by Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita and the Special Envoy for the Sudan of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), His Excellency Mr. Ismail Wais, which have given us a clear picture of the situation in South Sudan.

The Government of my country is closely following with much concern the developing situation in South Sudan since, according to the available reports, the political and security situation continues to be delicate and fragile, and the challenges facing the country remain substantial. Equatorial Guinea is bound to South Sudan by ties of particular affection. It was no coincidence that the proclamation of the independence of South Sudan coincided with His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo's term as President of the African Union. He personally participated in the historic event in Juba on 9 July 2011 and made his contribution to the process. Since that time, we have followed events in that brotherly country, for which I want to reiterate our support concerning the peace process and our commitment to stability and prosperity of South Sudan.

Equatorial Guinea believes that support for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the

African Union and other regional and subregional organizations is key to continuing mediation efforts among the opposing parties in South Sudan. The international community as a whole must step up its efforts to promote the political process in the country, which, given recent events, is the only realistic way to find a just and lasting resolution to the crisis facing a nation with certain economic potential. It is important that the parties to the conflict refrain from taking actions that could worsen the situation, and that they take measures to implement and honour the signed Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, which entails the cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians, access to humanitarian aid and an immediate return to the negotiations table.

Accordingly, the joint statement on the situation in South Sudan by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on 12 January deserves the support of Equatorial Guinea. Moreover, the outcome of the trilateral meeting among the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Chairperson of IGAD and the Secretary-General on January 27 in Addis Ababa merit the support of Equatorial Guinea. The Government of South Sudan must assume a leadership role in the political process in the country and continue its efforts to end clashes together with all other actors. We are all aware that, without the resolute support of the international community, it will be difficult to overcome the impasse in South Sudan.

To that end, we believe that the international community must continue to support current mediation efforts, especially those of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, and look for ways to ensure the success of the new phase of the High-Level Revitalization Forum process.

The Security Council must speak with one voice in situations like the that in South Sudan, as well as in difficult situations in which people are critically suffering. We must speak with one voice. We must provide constructive assistance to South Sudan. The members are convinced of the need to adopt harsh measures, but, as I said in my statement in January (see S/PV.8166), we must also pursue other parallel actions, such as the trip to Juba in December initiated by Ambassador Nikki Haley. Such actions must be persistent and continuous. The data concerning the humanitarian situation are worrying. It is therefore extremely important that humanitarian aid reach those who need it the most, and all parties to the conflict must allow such access without restrictions. That situation, combined with the massive number of internally displaced persons fleeing to neighbouring countries, presupposes the acute suffering of a vulnerable civilian population who are enduring violations of all kinds.

Lastly, I would like to convey Equatorial Guinea's support for and acknowledgment of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. We highly appreciate its efforts and contributions to bringing peace and stability in South Sudan in very difficult and complex conditions, in which its personnel's lives are put at risk as they are exposed to potentially fatal attacks.

**Mr. Inchauste Jordán** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation thanks Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita for her introduction of the special report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/143). Likewise, we also welcome the presence of the Special Envoy for South Sudan of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), His Excellency Mr. Ismail Wais. We thank him for his briefing today and take this opportunity to express our delegation's full support for the work he has been doing to make it possible for dialogue and the negotiation of a political settlement in South Sudan to succeed.

We would like once again to express our concern about the difficult security situation, the slow progress in the process of political dialogue and, above all, the precarious humanitarian conditions in South Sudan, all of which compounds an already difficult economic situation. Against that complicated backdrop, we are aware that it is very difficult to find an immediate solution, especially in the light of the deep divisions between the parties. It is necessary for regional organizations, the United Nations and the international community to unify their efforts and work in the same direction with clear objectives in mind. We in the Security Council have agreed that the only way out of this conflict will be through a process of inclusive and sincere political dialogue among the parties that leads to compliance with the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

Accordingly, we welcome IGAD's leadership and commitment to the people of South Sudan. Despite the difficulties that lie ahead, IGAD continues to strive to bring the Government and the opposition groups to the table for dialogue. It is clear that this kind of process

will not produce positive results until the parties take their commitments seriously and demonstrate genuine political will to see them implemented.

We welcome the progress that has been made in the second phase of the High-level Revitalization Forum on the peace process in South Sudan. We emphasize the inclusiveness of the process and encourage the parties to continue to follow that path. While there are differences on key issues such as governance and transitional security arrangements, the parties need to engage constructively with the process, which we hope will resume as soon as possible. In the same vein, we call for compliance with theagreement on the cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians and humanitarian access, which is fundamental to the continuation of the second phase of the Forum.

Furthermore, the humanitarian situation remains alarming. The data presented by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) show us a very difficult reality, in which around 60 per cent of the population will need humanitarian assistance in 2018. Millions of refugees and internally displaced persons face a lack of basic services, food insecurity and the outbreak of diseases such as cholera, together with the potential threat of famine in some parts of the country. We are also concerned about the many challenges that lie ahead this year. We call on the international community to cooperate with OCHA to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance in South Sudan.

Similarly, we believe that it is essential that a good operational environment be provided for humanitarian workers and the United Nations Mission in Southern Sudan (UNMISS). We call on Government and opposition forces to guarantee security for humanitarian actors throughout the country and allow for unrestricted access for humanitarian aid. We also welcome the conclusions of the special report of the Secretary-General on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

We believe that we must give priority to strengthening the political process in the country, support humanitarian access, take measures to prevent violations of the status of forces agreement, fight impunity and support the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan under the leadership of the African Union. We also believe that the possibility of adopting a more efficient model that takes advantage of the full capabilities of United Nations staff in the field should be explored. We must also review the mandate of the Regional Protection Force in order to adapt it to the current environment.

In conclusion, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the United Nations team, UNMISS and humanitarian actors for their dedicated and committed work in the difficult environment of South Sudan.

**Mr. Temenov** (Kazakhstan): I join previous speakers in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Bintou Keita and Special Envoy Ismail Wais for their comprehensive briefings and commitment to seeking a solution for the crisis in South Sudan. My delegation would like to make the following comments on three issues.

First, on the humanitarian situation, the continuing military actions, widespread violence and economic decline have resulted in escalating a humanitarian crisis in which more than 5 million people are suffering from severe food insecurity and 4 million South Sudanese have been displaced. Timely and effective humanitarian assistance is therefore extremely critical. Despite the presidential decree of 9 November, which ordered free movement for humanitarian actors, there is still no tangible improvement in humanitarian access to those in greatest need. At the same time, aid workers continue to be attacked and killed in different parts of the country. We therefore call on all signatories to the agreement of 21 December 2017 to immediately cease all hostilities and facilitate humanitarian access in accordance with that greement and strictly adhere to international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Secondly, on the political process, Kazakhstan praises the efforts of the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to implement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, which is the only way to achieve stability and progress in the country. We welcome the conduct of the second phase of the IGAD's High-level Revitalization Forum, which took place from 5 to 16 February, and hope that the Forum will result in the conclusion of a political agreement. It is of critical importance that the Council remain united in supporting the High-level Forum and in encouraging the parties to act in good faith. Furthermore, the support of South Sudan's neighbours is equally important if the Forum is to succeed. To be more effective, the political negotiations

should be bolstered by intercommunal reconciliation and confidence-building among local populations, as well as comprehensive strategies in economic development and resilience-building, with the full engagement of women and young people.

Thirdly, on the upcoming reconfiguration of the United Nations Mission inSouth Sudan (UNMISS), including the Regional Protection Force (RPF), Kazakhstan highly appreciates UNMISS for implementing its mandated tasks under very difficult circumstances. We support the recommendations of the Secretary-General's independent review of UNMISS, which asserts that the current mandate of Mission remains relevant, but that it should be modified to strengthen capacity-building and training of the armed forces and State institutions through a long-term security-sector reform programme.

We note some progress achieved in deploying the Regional Protection Force, which will enhance the capacity of UNMISS to protect civilians and improve the security environment. At the same time, we agree with the conclusion of the special report that the concept, mandate and configuration of the RPF need to be adapted to the current political and security environment.

**Mr. Meza-Cuadra** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the President for convening today's meeting and for the briefings of Ms. Bintou Keita and Mr. Ismail Wais. We also wish to highlight the important work they are doing.

We are dismayed by the extent of the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, as well as the ethnic violence and atrocities reported in the first report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, which includes perverse and systematic practices of sexual violence against women and childre . It is urgent to put an end to those crimes and punish those responsible. At the same time, the parties must comply with the cessation of hostilities agreement and commit to the revitalization of the South Sudanese peace process.

Peru supports efforts to revitalize that process and reiterates that the only way to achieve sustainable peace is through a political solution, which can be achieved only with the resolute determination of all parties. The parties to the conflict must be made aware of the opportunity to put an end to the conflict presented by the involvement of the international community, in particular the regional actors. We note that that opportunity could be ruined by the South Sudanese parties' lack of responsibility. In that regard, we stress the importance of the efforts made by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union and the United Nations to contain violence, end the suffering of the South Sudanese people, find a balanced solution to the conflict and alleviate regional tensions.

We support the call by IGAD and the African Union for the parties to be held accountable for violations of their own agreements. It is also essential that they be held accountable with regard to their responsibility for the heinous crimes committed, in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law. In that context, we believe that the African Union and the Government of South Sudan must accelerate the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, as agreed by the parties in the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. We must urgently protect witnesses.

In conclusion, we wish to express our support for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in its efforts to protect the population, which is facing numerous difficulties. We support the recommendations of the Secretary-General aimed at strengthening the Mission's ability to do so. We trust that a new mandate for the Mission that includes the support and training for Government and security institutions regarding issues relating to international humanitarian law and the investigation of grave violations of human rights will lead to adequate conditions for achieving the sustainable peace that South Sudan needs.

**Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire thanks Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Mr. Ismail Wais, Special Envoy for South Sudan of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), for their briefings on the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and on the political process in that country.

My intervention will focus on the following points: the political process initiated by IGAD through the second phase of the High-level Revitalization Forum of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, the humanitarian and human rights situation and the renewal of the UNMISS mandate.

Côte d'Ivoire commends all IGAD-led initiatives in the political process and welcomes the successful holding of the second phase of the High-level Revitalization Forum on the peace agreement, despite persistent tensions. The level of participation by the various actors in the South Sudan conflict in the second phase, as well as the intense consultations that took place in Addis Ababa, point to the gradual ownership of the political process by all parties.

My delegation is gratified that the parties have agreed on some adjustments to the 2015 peace agreement and encourages them to continue discussions on governance and security issues under the auspices of Special Envoy Wais, as part of the upcoming resumption of the second phase of the Forum. Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms its support for a political solution to the South Sudan crisis, and we welcome the renewed commitment of the parties to respect the cessation of hostilities agreement of 21 December 2017.

My country remains concerned about the precarious humanitarian situation and calls on the international community to support the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with a view to ensuring that funding needs are met and that people can benefit from humanitarian assistance.

With regard to the human rights situation, my country is concerned about allegations of massive violations and abuses by the parties involved, including gender-based sexual violence and violence against children, as indicated in the report of the Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan. My country urges the South Sudanese authorities to shed light on those allegations, to identify the parties responsible and to bring them to justice.

In that regard, my country joins the call by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, at its 751st meeting, for the South Sudanese Transitional Government of National Unity and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to urgently sign a memorandum of understanding on establishing the Hybrid Court and its swift integration into the country's legal framework. Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that the setting up and operationalization of the Hybrid Court will contribute to calming social tensions and fostering reconciliation among the South Sudanese people.

With regard to UNMISS, my country deplores the obstacles to the implementation of the Mission's mandate, in violation of the status of forces agreement, as my delegation believes that the presence of UNMISS contributes to stabilization and and helps protect many South Sudanese civilians. It is therefore important to ensure the optimal operation of the Mission in a secure environment.

In that regard, we endorse the recommendations of the Secretary General's report (S/2018/143) on the renewal of the Mission's mandate and on capacity-building for the South Sudanese Government and its security institutions on important issues such as violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the progress made in the deployment of the contingents of the Regional Protection Force and calls on the Government of South Sudan to remove the remaining obstacles that slow down the effective operationalization of the Force.

In conclusion, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative on assessing the police and troop capacity of UNMISS, and hopes that the results of that review will help the Mission adapt its operations to the needs on the ground.

Côte d'Ivoire calls on all warring parties in South Sudan to accept that a military solution cannot be the answer to the conflict in their country. Only political negotiations with the participation of all and an agreement reached by all parties can put an end to the conflict they face, which is tearing their beautiful country apart and only serves to prolong the suffering of the South Sudanese people.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Sudan.

**Mr. Malok** (South Sudan): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, for your leadership of the Security Council this month and to acknowledge the role of your predecessor in leading the Council last month. I would also like to thank Ms. Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and Ambassador Ismail Wais, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Special Envoy for South Sudan, for their briefings.

The Transitional Government of National Unity takes note of the special report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/143)on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

and would like to thank Mr. Kevin Kennedy and the entire UNMISS review team for their time and efforts.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the troop-contributing countries and all the men and women of the UNMISS in the civilian, military and police components for their tireless and courageous efforts in executing their mandate.

The Transitional Government of National Unity acknowledges that its primary responsibility is to protect its own population. However, it cannot exercise that responsibility while being constrained by voices calling for an armed embargo and sanctions and denying external support to the country.

The report acknowledges that South Sudan came into being with extremely limited institutional capacity in all areas of governance and Government services. The situation in South Sudan is not black and white. Development is achieved in a country over time — something that South Sudan did not have because it fell into conflict less than three years into its statehood. Instead of equating South Sudan with other countries whose development evolved over decades, we call upon the international community to view the Transitional Government of National Unity as its partner in order to facilitate meaningful development.

The protection-of-civilians sites approach was never designed as a long-term endeavour. It is therefore paramount that a way forward be found. Certain areas enjoy relative calm and stability, and we would therefore encourage the voluntary repatriation of the internally displaced to such areas. We welcome the readiness of UNMISS to explore lessons learned from the closure of the Melut site and hope that such lessons will soon be applied in the other protection-of-civilian sites. The sites have long been a source of friction between the Government and UNMISS. We therefore welcome UNMISS measures to ensure that sites are weapon-free, among other things, and encourage much more to be done in that respect.

The Transitional Government of National Unity stands ready to fully cooperate with UNMISS and various humanitarian actors, through the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and all relevant Government institutions or organs, to ensure that people in need receive the attention they so deserve. We also encourage UNMISS and various humanitarian actors to work in a more coherent manner in order to avoid duplication of effort and to maximize the resources at their disposal.

The Transitional Government of National Unity is working to build confidence among the civilian population through initiatives such as a national dialogue, so that people feel safe enough to return to their homes. We should also be mindful of those in protection-of-civilians sites who do not seek shelter because of insecurity, but rather to advance their own political and economic agendas.

The Transitional Government of National Unity is deeply concerned and alarmed about the allegations of sexual misconduct perpetrated by UNMISS police in Wau and hopes they are just isolated cases. It is unfortunate that UNMISS police took advantage of women in a vulnerable situation who were under their protection. We welcome the steps taken by the leadership of UNMISS to withdraw the accused contingent and launch an investigation into the matter. We hope that the investigation will be credible so as to protect the long-standing good reputation of the Blue Helmets.

I would like to point out that the Government decided not to sign the declaration of principles during the second phase of the High-level Revitalization Forum, because it was optional.

With regard to the constraints faced by UNMISS when patrolling certain areas, the Government would like to suggest joint patrols and assistance in building the capacity of local security personnel, while helping to maintain peace and security in patrol areas. The Government has always called for the reinstatement of capacity-building in the UNMISS mandate. We note that the report recommends some form of it, but we disagree with the notion that capacity-building may contribute to the conflict. On the contrary, strengthening institutions such as the police, army and the judiciary by building their capacity in international law, humanitarian law and all other relevant law would help to promote and professionalize the rule of law.

In connection with the calls for an adjustment of some elements of the current Regional Protection force mandate, and in the light of the improved security situation in Juba, the Transitional Government of National Unity would like to suggest the deployment of the Regional Protection Force in other areas that are currently experiencing instability.

The Transitional Government of National Unity approached the High-level Revitalization Forum in good faith and with the willingness to reach an amicable agreement with all the parties. However, the unrealistic demands made by opposition groups in the previous session of the Forum are unhelpful and seek to push us further from the quest for a sustainable peace agreement.

The Transitional Government of National Unity strongly reaffirms its commitment to the peace process and to working with UNMISS and the international community as a whole. South Sudan continues to deeply appreciate the support that the international community provided for our liberation struggle, as well as the goodwill continuously demonstrated by many friendly nations and by the United Nations. We also appreciate the efforts under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which culminated in the signing of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and the recent High-level Revitalization Forum initiative.

In conclusion, we hope and trust that there will be greater improvement towards a more effective and constructive dialogue with the Security Council in shaping the vital UNMISS mandate, and with UNMISS in its implementation thereafter.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

*The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.8193

# Security Council

Seventy-third year

*Provisional*

**8193**rd meeting

Wednesday, 28 February 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

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|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Alotaibi | (Kuwait) |
| *Members:* | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Mr. Inchauste Jordán |
| | China | Mr. Wu Haitao |
| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue |
| | Equatorial Guinea | Mr. Ndong Mba |
| | Ethiopia | Ms. Guadey |
| | France | Mr. Delattre |
| | Kazakhstan | Mr. Tumysh |
| | Netherlands | Mr. Van Oosterom |
| | Peru | Mr. Meza-Cuadra |
| | Poland | Ms. Wronecka |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Polyanskiy |
| | Sweden | Mr. Orrenius Skau |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Hickey |
| | United States of America | Ms. Tachco |

## Agenda

Date of election to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice

Note by the Secretary-General concerning the date of an election to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice (S/2018/133)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatim:ecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Date of election to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice**

**Note by the Secretary-General concerning the date of an election to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice (S/2018/133)**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/160, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/133, which contains a note by the Secretary-General concerning the date of an election to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to adopt the draft resolution before it without a vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2403 (2018).

*The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.*